



A
HOME TOUR
THROUGH VARIOUS PARTS
OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM.

BEING
A CONTINUATION OF THE "HOME TOUR THROUGH
THE MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS."

ALSO,
MEMOIRS
OF AN
ASSISTANT COMMISSARY-GENERAL.

BY
SIR GEORGE HEAD,
AUTHOR OF

"FOREST SCENES AND INCIDENTS IN THE WILDS OF NORTH AMERICA."

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TO HIS EXCELLENCE

SIR FRANCIS BOND HEAD, BART., K.C.H.,

LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR OF UPPER CANADA,
ETC., ETC., ETC.,

I DEDICATE THIS SMALL VOLUME,—

INSIGNIFICANT INDEED AS A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT,

BUT A SINCERE

TESTIMONY OF A BROTHER'S REGARD.

GEORGE HEAD.

ATHENÆUM CLUB, PALL MALL,

29th June, 1837.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

THE present Continuation of the “Home Tour” embraces a period antecedent to that of the volume of last year. Of this fact, unimportant with reference to the matter contained in the pages, it is sufficient simply to acquaint the reader.

While preparing for the press, I determined, for more reasons than one, to change my original plan of introducing at the end, a brief ramble in England of the current year. I have accordingly appended the “Memoirs of an Assistant-Commissary General” instead.

The latter production, referring to an early date, conceived off hand, and unpremeditatedly put forth to the public, being explicit, needs little preface. Yet if it were at all necessary to delineate those causes or influences, whether springing from duty or inclination, that allured or compelled me to the somewhat erratic course described now and heretofore in the present and two former volumes, I have thereby at any rate, now in part supplied that deficiency.

GEORGE HEAD.

ATHENÆUM CLUB, PALL MALL,
29th June, 1837.

A HOME TOUR CONTINUED,

THROUGH

VARIOUS PARTS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

CHAPTER I.

ISLE OF MAN.

The *Mona's Isle* Steamer—Rough Music—A Ventriloquist—Douglas Head—Extreme Clearness of the Water—The Pier—Porters—Hotel Agents—Castle *Mona*—Mode of conveyance thither—British Hotel—The Town of Douglas.

THE sun shone bright, and music played gaily on board as the “*Mona's Isle*” steamer, one fine morning, bound to Douglas in the Isle of Man, weighed anchor, set steam, and made the best of her way from Liverpool out of the harbour. Whether or not it be right to use the expression the music played, as we say the wind blew, it were at all events wrong to dignify the present three or four musicians by the name of a band, they being in fact sailors belonging to the vessel, owners of a set of extremely discordant instruments, and the leader a hard featured pock-marked man, who squared his elbows, stood bolt upright in a military posture, pointed the clarionet downwards in a direct line with his toes, and signalized himself by playing a great deal louder

than all the rest together. The paddles meanwhile of the "Mona's Isle" steamer continued to beat time different from that of the melody as we proceeded down the river, till we were at the mouth of the Mersey; when, being in the open sea, the instruments were laid aside, the men betook themselves to their several occupations, and the paddles now drummed on by themselves in their own measure.

In the space of an hour we were comfortably gliding across the unruffled channel, each passenger rejoicing in newly acquired freedom from the smoky confines of the city, inhaling a pure atmosphere, and above all well pleased to behold now securely arranged on the deck in decent order, all those identical packages and portmanteaus, that only a short time before he was following through narrow streets and by-ways with overheated solicitude, like a cow her devoted offspring in a butcher's cart, in the wake of the porter's barrow. Of the crew, one swept anew the clean white deck, another rubbed salient knobs of brass with a piece of shamoy leather, and a third devoted the whole of his care to restoring stray articles to their proper places.

One of the performers, to the science of music added that of ventriloquism, and afforded by his skill, really rational delight to a numerous group both of quarter deck and steerage passengers, who were attracted to the forecastle by a performance which, though here presented to the public in humble guise, afforded nevertheless no mean specimen of a dramatic entertainment. Besides the mechanical process of his craft, the artist also exercised the functions of improvisatore, and with ready wit, good feeling, and tact, and a memory richly stored with the pleasantries

of the ancient Punch, continued to keep the laughter of his hearers continually on the wing; so that it were pity to reflect, witnessing the present display of native talent, on the light of the needy dramatist thus hidden under a bushel, and extinguished by the *vis inertiae* of poverty, that weighs merit down.

What reference the word ventriloquist can possibly bear to a faculty whereby the whole mystery is performed by the muscles of the throat, I am at a loss to know, whereas by the etymology, one might fairly presume that that indolent organ the belly, whose province proverbially is to do nothing but eat, were now about to assume a new privilege, break silence, and talk. At all events, no matter how the sound be generated, the artist has positively no control over its transmission, and although indistinctness of utterance may create a sort of impression of distance, yet for the rest of the deception, the *hic et ubique* sensation of a voice proceeding down the chimney, or upwards through the window, such fantasies exist, even to their unlimited extent, solely in the imagination of the hearer. A familiar or doll is an indispensable member of a ventriloquist's establishment, and for aught we know to the contrary, the Grecian sage with his demon, was merely a ventriloquist; or at all events an autoloquist, or thinker aloud. On the present occasion, the office was performed by a small wooden effigy, in likeness of an old man with a wig, whose lips, when supposed to speak, moved extremely naturally, so as by alluring the eye to a definite point, effectually to imbue every spectator with a notion of reality.

The entertainment in the way of dialogue was sustained between the ventriloquist and those of the

various persons present who felt inclined to enter the list, and propose to "Tommy," for such was the doll's name, an argument or a question ; to all which the latter retorted with infinite success upon his antagonists, and at the close of each sally, proclaimed by a curiously comical laugh, a consciousness of success ; and having moreover the infinite advantage of never changing countenance or colour, he floored his assailants as they came to the charge, one after another. Tommy, in motley company, and of such the present group consisted, evinced propriety of sentiment, discreet phrase, and extreme good humour, and, by no means a contemptible moralist, promptly held in awe the intruder, giving people at once to understand, that though it were his vocation to keep fun for ever alive, yet he knew how to stifle at its first gasp, the breath of ribaldry. Wherefore, every female on board, feeling herself securely posted within the Rubicon of delicacy, witnessed without the slightest apprehension of offence, these amusing colloquies.

A child three years old, a bold little boy, now stepped in among the rest to the foreground, and there alone commenced, without preface or fear, an earnest conversation with Tommy. By common consent all others drew back, and left a clear stage to the juvenile performer ; and in the course of this dialogue, well maintained on both sides, the scene created a powerful impression ; for the understanding of the child and its feelings to boot, were played upon in such a ludicrous degree, that it evidently entertained no manner of doubt that Tommy was a rational, living creature. To the new wooden acquaintance, in the artlessness of infancy, it dedicated

the pure first fruits of early friendship, and with sympathies increasing more and more every moment, proposed innumerable questions relating to his history. The growing illusion at last became perfect, and after entreaties repeated in the course of the dialogue, the child finally possessed itself of the friend of his heart, and carrying away the diminutive idol, returned in a couple of minutes drowned in tears and sobs, because Tommy declined to answer any more questions.

At three o'clock, the passengers partook of an excellent dinner below; after which, returning upon deck, we performed the remainder of the voyage in calm, delightful weather; the shores of England fading meanwhile fast away, and the Isle of Man in the distance rising from the sea in a straight line from end to end, although the land in the middle is so low as to create the appearance of two separate islands distinct from each other. As we neared the port, the sun, on a clear autumnal evening, sank behind the island, and as we approached the pier, we fell within the shadow of the bluff rock, called Douglas Head, whose black craggy summit, gilded by his rays, was beautifully contrasted with the peculiarly light green of the verdure on the hills, and the more than ordinary transparency of the water below. In no other part of the world, I really believe, is the sea more pellucid than on the coast of the Isle of Man, where the rivers, proportionate always in extent to the parent land, are mere brooks, and these even less charged than is usual with alluvial soil. I am quite sure it were easy at this spot, at a depth of forty feet, to count the sixty-four squares of a moderate sized chess-board.

A dense cluster of the inhabitants crowded on the pier head, as is the daily custom among the town's people, to greet the arrival of the "Mona's Isle"; and we were making, as I expected, a prosperous landing, when the steam was suddenly let off, and the anchor dropped within an hundred and fifty yards of the point of disembarkation; creating thus the necessity of stepping down from the vessel bag and baggage into a boat, and landing once more from thence on the broad stone steps of the pier.

It is well that measures are already in progress to remedy the evil, but, taking the pier at Douglas in its present state, there is no other I believe within the British dominions, where a large sum of money has been expended to so little purpose. Accessible, unless at the top of a tide, to no vessels larger than small fishing craft, the chief purpose to which the Douglas Pier has been hitherto applied, is that of a promenade, while the lighthouse erected at the extremity, is intercepted towards several points of the compass on the south-east by Douglas Head; on the summit of which rock, another lighthouse, elevated a considerable height above the other, and visible, as a lighthouse ought to be, from all parts of the horizon, in order to remedy the former defect, has since been built. As the pier stretches into the sea to the eastward, the south side is washed by the Douglas river, a narrow stream, mid-leg deep at its mouth at low tide; and parallel on the north side is a reef of rocks, which, as they enclose a considerably greater depth of water, it seems strange were not accordingly chosen as the site and foundation.

Nevertheless, with regard to the said pier and lighthouse, whatever in future time may be the

improvement, when the coast of the Isle of Man becomes resorted to for the purposes of sea bathing, at all events, even at present a gallant steamer carries the mail from England and returns every day. Not many more than fifty years ago, a lanthorn elevated on a long pole on the beach, was the only winter beacon for the poor fishermen, and a severe tempest, one dreary night, that struck with terror their little squadron, extinguished the light, and drove many boats in confusion upon the rocks, whereby the shore was strewed with those who miserably perished, and many wives next morning were there seen bewailing their husband's corpses, caused a degree of universal sympathy, that, with the aid of Parliament, set on foot the plan of the structure, and effected its completion.

A traveller ascending the steps of Douglas Pier, might reasonably fancy he was about to enter the extensive precincts of a metropolis of note, such are the number of eager faces that direct their looks towards him, and such the number of obtrusive agents from the inns, of which there are six or eight at least in the town, who after the manner of "touters" belonging to stage-coaches, stand like a swarm of horse-flies in his way, each holding the respective card of the establishment obstinately under his nose. I know of no municipal regulations of more charitable purpose than such as, on occasions like these, serve to protect the sea-sick and the stranger; and such have performed wonders of late years at the port of Douglas. The above cited remnant of barbarous custom, bears slight comparison with the truly outrageous conduct permitted among the porters, at a

period only four or five years ago. These fellows, now subjected to proper control, and a decent, orderly class of men, then provincially called hobblers, were of manners mitigated by no sort of discipline whatever. It was then impracticable without an effort of strength, and coming to personal issue with the offender, to prevent luggage and parcels being forcibly carried away, one knew not by whom or whither; and I have formerly seen, in the case of a person unable to take his own part, an extended line of neutral faces quietly looking on over the rails at the passing scene; namely, the owner hustled above, and half a dozen boisterous hobblers fighting for his luggage below.

Notwithstanding the laudable anxiety of the agents of the several inns in the cause of the landlords, so as with equal diligence, whether the hostelry be good or bad, at all events to conduct the traveller to it; the proprietors of the Castlemona Hotel have the additional advantage of a carriage which waits upon the arrival of the steamer to enforce persuasion. This hotel was originally built for the residence of the late Duke of Athol, though some time since converted to the purposes of an inn. Its situation, a mile from the town, fronts the sea, in the centre of a fine bay, that affords an agreeable ride or drive across sands all the way from the town. A table d'hôte is here provided regularly during the summer, and well attended, chiefly by residents of Whitehaven, Liverpool, and Manchester.

It is curious to observe, on the arrival of the steamer, with what dispatch a full complement of passengers are acquired, and so soon as selected, how triumphantly they are driven away. As the luggage is dis-

patched by another conveyance, a few minutes are amply sufficient for the above operation ; and as the carriage is an open one, the candidates have in fact nothing else to do but to make up their minds to go, previous to departure. The vehicle is a sort of high narrow waggon, shaped like a hearse, and so confined in dimensions, that the convenience of those who travel therein is evidently purchased at the expense of ease and grace of attitude ; the passengers in fact, although probably utter strangers to each other, sitting *vis-à-vis*, like onions in a string, and in a row so closely packed, that they seem pinioned, or handcuffed. In the meantime so little space is afforded between the two rows, that one man without leaning forward may readily light a cigar from the mouth of his opposite neighbour. Altogether, as I saw a dozen people crammed together in a heap, and thus whisked away from the pier-head on a party of pleasure, I could not help comparing them, owing to their ludicrous appearance, for the moment, to a set of convicts, on their way from a county gaol to the hulks, or Newgate.

For my own part, during my short stay at Douglas, I found excellent entertainment at the British Hotel within the town, kept by the worthy Mrs. Dixon. At this house I was furnished with good apartments, and, with regard to fare, such was the liberality and good will of my hostess, as well as the redundancy of provisions at her command, in consequence of a four o'clock ordinary included in the *ménage*, that my table was crowded with viands actually in despite of my own remonstrances, in a degree of profusion quite incompatible with the reasonable charges in the bill. Well housed and

provided, with good saddle-horses to be hired, and macadamized roads to ride upon all over the island, a person not over fastidious, and desirous of a central point from whence to make rural excursions, will not in this hotel have just cause to complain either of comfortable sojourn, or the means of peregrination.

There is little inducement, I think, as a permanent residence to remain in the town, for the site is low ; nevertheless, although the adjacent country abounds in beautiful, picturesque spots of rural habitation, by far the greater proportion of persons, who, attracted to the island by the prospect of cheap wines and provisions, have taken up their abode therein, reside at Douglas.

One very long, narrow street, forms the principal part of the old town, and contains curious specimens of the primitive, unadorned dwellings of English fishermen. The houses, mostly unequal, some large, some small, are built of rough blocks of stone ; the street is passable with difficulty from its convexity, and the inconvenient manner wherewith it is pitched with irregular and acute boulders. On the elevated land, immediately contiguous and above the buildings, many new houses and villas have been recently erected, besides a handsome and spacious church below, whereof, by the way, the clerk has the sweetest tenor voice I ever heard. He was assisted by a group of young men and women under his direction, and the performance, which, without any musical accompaniment whatever, consisted of psalms adapted to ancient rural church tunes, assorted with taste and simplicity, displayed to my mind an exquisite specimen of pure English psalmody.

CHAPTER II.

ISLE OF MAN.

Douglas during the Cholera—Church of Kirkbraddan—A Funeral—Another Funeral—A Visit to the South—Derby Haven—Castleton—Poolvash—Marble Quarries—A Misunderstanding—A vicious Pony—Salt Water Spring—Port le Murray—Sullen demeanour of Females—Spanish Head—Sea Birds—Further Misunderstanding—An Eclaircissement.

I VISITED the Isle of Man in the summer of that year, when the cholera made its first appearance in England ; which disease had hitherto constantly hovered on my route, spreading its ravages in every town through which I happened to pass ; but Douglas, on my arrival, was reported by all its inhabitants, free. There was, no doubt, an anxious and interested desire on the part of the townspeople to suppress, even the most remote hint of apprehension on the subject ; for not only were paragraphs bandied about on sanatory regulations in the Manx newspapers, but the doctors fell to loggerheads in print with each other on the same theme. After all, I placed little faith and credence on these learned discussions, neither troubling myself on the theories of infection nor contagion, nor imagining that I received, whatever people might say, on the score of security, any additional assurance. Epidemic diseases, in my humble opinion, as the wind, that travels on sightless pinions, move whither they list, and like other metaphysical essences, are not to be made sub-

ject to physical laws. The terms infection and contagion, so long as matter be infinitely divisible, evidently mean nothing at all ; for who can predicate of the mote that floats in the sunbeam, were it reduced to a millionth degree below mortal ken, that even so diminutive a portion of matter might not communicate by actual contact, by its very tangibility, a contagious disease ; or that all those diseases known by the name of infectious, be not actually communicated by physical contagion or contact in the same manner. Of those epidemics, that during their visitations from time to time, sweep the land of the young together with the old, it were better at once to confess that we know no more after all of the abstruse principles of nature, that guide their origin, determine their properties, and provide for their creation or generation, than as to all such matters, we are able to determine with regard to our own existence.

It is certainly to be lamented, that the predominance of men's worldly interests, always defeats the pursuit of truth in matters of investigation, and in the present instance, when reports of the cholera at last began to arise, it was judged expedient rather to smother them at their birth, than repel, from an impression of fear, the usual concourse of summer visitants, and thence lose a source of annual profit to the inhabitants of the island.

Not a single case of the disease had yet been publicly promulgated, when I strolled one morning from Douglas towards the small ancient village of Kirkbraddan ; the church and church-yard of which are situated on a secluded spot, two miles distant, adjoining the high road leading from Douglas to Peel

Town. I thought I had never seen altogether a sweeter portrait of a village place of worship, or an humble edifice more truly adapted to a rural congregation, when I was unexpectedly interrupted by the sound of voices, joined in melody, and proceeding from a funeral party, who, as they walked along, were chaunting a hymn. These persons were advancing from the road along an avenue of stately trees leading to the church, which avenue, as trees in this part of the island are rare, is the more remarkable; and only so soon as they had entered the avenue, they began to sing. As they approached the grave, which I now saw had been already prepared, I had a better opportunity of observing the procession. The persons who chaunted, plain-dressed villagers, walked in front; then came two men, bearing the corpse of an infant in a coffin, suspended within a couple of feet of the ground on a sling, the ends of which were twisted round each of their hands. After the corpse, walked the parents, and then several of the sympathizing neighbours; these, and in fact almost all the attendants being provided each with a small cluster of flowers, as it were a melancholy emblem of death and infancy, of sweetness and decay. With such simple preparations, and although the coffin, on the lid of which a few of the flowers were strewed, was wholly uncovered, no memorial of real respect, or tribute of warm affection, was absent from the ceremonial: and if other striking images were wanting, by pathetic contrast with each other, to embellish the scene, that of the father of the baby, a sunburnt athletic peasant, in his own person, and relating to his child, afforded an example. On the one hand, a hardy British labourer, erect in

the full vigour of manhood ; on the other, an infant deposited in its grave ; a countenance rigid and inflexible, and a heart panting in the throes of sympathy. As with unmoved expression, after the service was over, the mourning parent placidly leaned forward, to take of the early summoned a last adieu, not a muscle of his face moved, nor a lip stirred or quivered ; but the tears that arose in his eyes, bursting through a channel petrified by grief, became every succeeding instant more and more swollen, till the stern law of gravity bid each tributary globule, first for a moment tremble in its sphere, and then drop upon the ground.

The child was no sooner buried, than another funeral party appeared, smaller in number, and unattended, as in the preceding instance, by singers, moving slowly and silently the whole length of the avenue, the bearers, carrying on their shoulders in the usual manner, the coffin of a full grown person, and about a dozen respectable, well-dressed people, walking two and two, closing the procession. At present, besides myself, there were hardly any other persons, as is usually the case on such occasions, present as spectators ; therefore not wishing to appear singular, as the party moved towards the grave in another corner of the church-yard, I fell in the rear, and walked thither with the rest. The service was decently performed, and without hurry or the slightest deviation from established usage, but as I stepped towards the grave and looked upon the coffin, I perceived it was a plain shell, bearing only the surname and age of the deceased upon the lid, without farther distinction or reference whatever ; that is to say, Mrs. ——,

aged —. Thinking the circumstance strange, I was directing my enquiries to the subject, when I was accosted by a good looking man, dressed in a full suit of black, who politely undertook to satisfy my curiosity. My informant was not only chief mourner, but landlord of the deceased, who, he said, had arrived in Douglas from England only a week before, and had taken lodgings in his house as a stranger, upon the plea of expecting, as she said, ere many days passed, to be joined by her husband. He knew no more of her history, otherwise than she was taken ill and died; and in answer to additional questions, it further appeared, of a disease so sudden, that hardly thirty-six hours had elapsed to the present moment, since she was first smitten. Farther than this he was silent, neither could I persuade him to answer more interrogatories, wherefore, I came at once to a conclusion, that has been since verified by a visit in a subsequent year to the same spot, where the traveller may now see a number of diminutive grave-stones, planted in a dense cluster, so as by themselves entirely to occupy this angle of the church-yard. Every grave-stone bears its inscription, each inscription consists only of one word, and that one word is no other than “Cholera.” Notwithstanding that my informant, when questioned as to the complaint of the deceased, most cautiously declined to relate a fact, that it became his interest as an inhabitant of Douglas, from general motives, to repress, he was not the less ready to tender his aid to a stranger, and in the total absence of friends and relatives, accompany, as chief mourner, the forlorn deceased to the tomb.

Even subsequent to this event, it was yet a few

days before the disease was publicly acknowledged in Douglas ; afterwards the intelligence spread rapidly through every corner of the island ; the effects of which communication I had an opportunity of witnessing in an excursion in the interior. An unusually forcible sensation was indeed created among the simple-minded inhabitants ; whereof I will now give a farther account, as I describe a visit made at that time to the extreme south of the island.

I left Douglas by a two-horse stage-coach, which travels three times a week from thence to Castleton, by a road which, although leading direct eleven miles from seaport to seaport, runs so much in land, that at rare intervals a view is obtained of the sea. The original road, the former having been made only a few years, is still more coastward, and here also the line of cliffs is so irregular, as to create in the minds of those, who love to ramble along the sea shore, a similar disappointment. In fact, a person desirous of an expedition under such advantages, and really anxious to see the coast of the Isle of Man, ought neither to travel on wheels nor on horseback, but go on foot, for by no other possible means, can he follow the bendings of the coast. The face of the country along this track, skirting the chain of hills which diagonally intersects the island, is sufficiently elevated to bear a mountainous character, but as its features are similar, in the line between Douglas and Peel town, of which part I shall take a little more notice by and by, I shall say no more as regards the surrounding scenery at present. Within a mile of Castleton, we passed through the small village of Derby Haven, having now reached the sea shore at

Castleton Bay. Here, several new buildings have lately been erected, among the rest, the finest modern structure to be seen upon the island, a public college for the education of the sons of the clergy ; and as the harbour of Derby Haven has superior natural advantages to that of Castleton, it is probable, as speculation rapidly continues to increase, that, in a few years at farthest, both places will be joined in one.

Notwithstanding the wide extent and bold sweep of the bay, the harbour of Castleton is shallow and rocky, accessible only to small craft, which in the mouth of the river, at the entrance of the town, may be seen at low water within a sort of rude dock, lazily reclining on their beam ends on the mud. It is not difficult to describe the features of the said river. Immediately above the dock, a stone bridge on two small arches spans its breadth. Above the bridge, the stream in summer is so shallow and scanty, that although a wide spread of boulders and shingle bear testimony to precarious freshes from the mountains, yet generally for the time being, a score of thirsty cattle could drink it dry ; at all events, I have seen women dip tea cups therein, and several together thus, as by a regular process, filling their pails. Half a mile only above the town, the channel hardly exceeds a dozen feet in width, and then it dwindle to a rivulet.

Notwithstanding the residence of the Governor of the Isle of Man is in Castleton, and the head quarters of the troops, consisting of a company detached from the particular regiment doing duty for the time being in the city of Carlisle, are there stationed ; the town, compared with the more busy appearance of

Douglas, seems deserted and dreary ; nevertheless the streets are considerably wider and cleaner, and the inhabitants, for the most part, instead of casual visitors, are permanent residents, including many persons who have married and finally settled on the island. The superb ancient pile of building called Castle Rushen, is well worthy of a visit, and at the present time in such good repair, that some of the apartments are appropriated to the purposes of a gaol, in others are held the regular courts of law, and a few are occupied by the municipal authorities, for the deposit of records and other public documents. Besides the aforesaid gaol, there is no other on the island.

My object not being for the present to remain at Castleton, I immediately hired a horse, and pursued my journey by a road which, proceeding for about the distance of a mile westward, is intercepted by another at right angles. By the latter road I then bent my course southward straight to the sea shore, till I arrived at the village, or rather at a row of small fishermen's cottages, called the village of Poolvash. This village was for the present my point of direction, for I was desirous of seeing certain quarries of native black marble, situated on the sea shore close adjacent. Arrived at the spot, having looked around without perceiving the quarries, I rode to the aforesaid cottages to make enquiry of a woman, whom, with a child in her arms, I saw standing at her door. The woman, stretching out her arm in the direction of a black reef of rocks, which the tide, at present on the ebb, had left bare, said that there were the quarries, at the same time she eyed me with a suspicious scrutinizing glance, that I thought singular.

As I had obtained the information I required, and as the woman's dialect, in a sort of Welsh accent, was not very distinct, I forebore for the present to enter into further conversation, and immediately rode away. Then proceeding a few hundred yards along the beach, I dismounted, fastened my animal's bridle to a large stone, and walked seaward to the quarries. These consist of numerous small excavations, situated below high water-mark, filled with water at flood tide, and baled out previous to working every day, until the pit, becoming so large as to render the operation too laborious, is necessarily abandoned by the workmen, who then sink another. Reefs of remarkably black rock are abundant at this part of the coast ; they extend considerably high upon the beach, although the pure marble, as already stated, all lies low ; indeed a stranger might readily pass the spot, and unless the quarries were brought to his notice, fail to perceive them. They have been worked nevertheless many years, and actually furnished a part of the material for the building of St. Paul's Cathedral. Nothing more was now to be observed on the spot than a temporary mason's hut, surrounded by a few slabs for chimney-pieces and grave-stones, in progress of manufacture ; the marble of which, of a rich black and shining quality, was already fashioned and polished. A few ordinary mason's tools lay scattered about the hut, but within and without there were no other preparations for labour, not even a common crane.

Intending to pursue the line of the sea shore on my return from the quarries, I had no sooner again approached the aforesaid fishermen's cottages, than as I was passing by, I was in a manner waylaid by

half-a-dozen or more women, who having walked in the intermediate time out of their houses, had now assembled together, and were holding earnest colloquy with her with the baby. All appeared to be consulting together, but the first mentioned, acting as spokeswoman, broke silence, by asking me without ceremony and abruptly, whether or not I were a doctor? I immediately answered that I had not the honor to belong to such a learned profession, and was then proceeding to ride away, when having reiterated the question in an angry tone, she added, "you'll not tell me that you're no doctor, when I know very well that you are—I know you well enough and the horse you ride—I know where you came from—but go your ways! go your ways!" Being in total ignorance as to what extraordinary crotchet the woman had taken in her head, and feeling an inclination to come to a right understanding, I asked whether by accident any sick person happened to be in the house, intending thus merely to commence a rational conference; but the question, simple as it was, served not the purpose of reconciliation. "A doctor you are," exclaimed three or four together, "your horse belongs to a doctor; we know the horse as well as the doctor, who lives in Castleton." I now actually departed, thinking that, since through the identity of my horse I had got into the scrape, such as it was, it were well at all events for his former master to be rid of such a stumbling brute. The animal, in fact, really was I believe the very worst of steeds then on hire in the town of Castleton, and through ill luck, there being no other in the stable, I now happened to sit upon his back. He was a very old, narrow-backed pony, combining

in a rare degree in his person, the infirmities of age, with the folly and frowardness of youth. His hoofs, lifted from the ground by an unbending knee, perpetually came in contact with the loose stones in his way; which he would kick before him to the right and left, almost with sufficient velocity to kill a sparrow. Frequent and serious trips were consequent on these collisions, some indeed so bad, that by main strength alone I was enabled to keep him on his legs, and after each blunder, the less easily recoverable by reason of spavined hocks, he no sooner resumed his equilibrium, than, as if in the joy of deliverance, he flung his nose in the air, and blindly bolted in all sorts of inconvenient directions. At the best of times he was hard-mouthed and restive, and particularly whenever I stopped to admire a beautiful object, just as certainly he bobbed clean round like a whirligig, and set his tail to it. Such being the Pegasus I now unfortunately bestrode, whatever might have been the history of his former master, the doctor, I endeavoured to think of both as little as possible as I proceeded on my way, but as I rode onwards along the sea shore, which here spreads for two miles southward, in the form of an extensive bay, I could not help reflecting on the unaccountable conduct of the aforesaid women. Wherefore such indisputable tokens of ill will were now shewn towards me by a peasantry, whom till that moment, from previous experience and report I had imagined to be the most quiet, peaceable people on earth, I was at a loss to conceive; and the more I reflected, the more I thought that past appearances might very possibly be fallacious, and exhibit no proof of real hostility whatever. Nay, it seemed I

thought feasible, that really believing me to be a doctor, the women were justly angry, because I denied my profession, and that too at a time, while a sufferer, for aught I knew, was actually in want of assistance. Some groaning dame perhaps was at that very moment invoking the aid of Lueina, whereby if so inclined, I, at all events, might have made a *coup d'essai* in the obstetric art, and gained by self-taught skill, a gratuitous diploma.

Two miles southward of Poolvash, is the little fishing town of Port-le-Murray, and about half way, close to the sea shore, is a stream which, rising a little below high water mark from a fissure of the earth, is called by the natives a salt water spring, and celebrated as a curiosity accordingly. Considering the nature of the ground from which it flows, I saw little to interest the mind in the phenomenon ; for the island here assumes the form of a narrow tongue of land ; and this stream very probably is supplied by a subterraneous channel from the opposite shore. While uncovered by the sea, it flows strong enough to turn a small mill. After all, it were perhaps a misnomer to call it a spring, if it be not that any stream continually flowing, whether salt or fresh, is entitled to the appellation ; and at all events, follows the same law which regulates the equable supply of fresh ones, whereby under-ground reservoirs receive by constant drainage large volumes of water, sustained and replenished in a degree far exceeding its exit by narrower apertures.

“ Rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis, at ille
Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.”

A lively basin, a miniature fleet of boats, a sturdy

well built quay, and a tidy cluster of houses, for the most part new, compose the neat busy little fishing town of Port-le-Murray, where on my arrival every man seemed bustling and active, and whether baling water out of his boat, laying rope in neat coils upon the shore, moving from place to place under a heavy load of net upon his shoulder, or engaged in any other portion of diligent labour, at all events, every single individual was booted like a rhinoceros.

Hence, I turned my pony's head inland, and then proceeding in a slanting direction, made the best of my way towards Spanish Head, one of the most rugged and lofty of those wild cliffs that bound the southern extremity of the island, the inland portion of this narrow promontory, here about a couple of miles wide, consisting of hills, rocks, valleys, ravines, and gulleys. I now made little progress, owing to the badness of the road, and moreover, the farther I went, the worse the track became, so that I was soon obliged to dismount and lead my animal by the bridle ; sometimes passing over shelving slabs of rock, and frequently obliged to remove with difficulty huge loose stones, that casually intercepted the way. Meanwhile, the land on each side is divided in exceedingly small portions, fenced by stone walls, and the gigantic features on the coast bear inverse proportion to the limited extent of territory.

Within a mile of Spanish Head, stands a small hamlet, in a spot so retired, and composed of edifices so rude, that it is really hard to predicate of the houses at a little distance, whether they are masses of rock or human dwellings ; however, as I approached, I perceived, in evidence of the latter conclusion, five

or six women standing together on the spot. Not one man was present among the group, who by their behaviour might have given me fair reason to suppose that such a being was a rare visitant within their demesnes. I would very willingly have left my pony in this village, whereby I could have proceeded a great deal more at my ease alone, but the sullenness of the women, who by the way, in dress and appearance, reminded me of the peasantry of Tralee, in Ireland, made me disinclined to enter into any parley or negotiation. During my short trip from Castleton, I had little encouragement to enter into human conversation, and the fishermen's wives at Poolvash had read me a lesson by no means yet forgotten. Wherefore, regarding these Manx females, as wild, unsociable creatures, saying not a single word to any of them, and holding the pony's bridle on my arm, I doggedly walked on. However, a quarter of a mile farther, obstructions became so frequent, that to part with the steed became absolutely indispensable, wherefore, I made his bridle fast as well as I could to a stone wall, and there left him.

I had now arrived at Spanish Head, than which bluff angle of the coast there is no part perhaps within the extent of the three kingdoms more grand in feature and truly magnificent; the elevated plain, the precipices, on either side, and the roaring sea below, would rather seem in accordance with the limits of some vast continent, than merely a salient edge of the island of Mona, a diminutive speck hardly observable on the face of an ordinary map. Already a countless host of sea birds had notice of my approach, and accordingly the whole web-footed colony was in a state of alarm. The gulls wheeled round

and round impatiently high in the air, and packs of the red-billed chough, with the continued harsh scream of the former mingled their wild cry, holding themselves as it were in a detached phalanx, and, like a party of marines, ready to do duty by the side of sailors. Theirs is a screaming, salt-water note; and as they feed occasionally upon fish, and as to their habits and inland retreats evince a similar taste with the gulls, it would seem as if nature designed these birds, though not absolutely aquatic themselves, to associate with aquatic companions.

Spanish Head, separated only from the small dis-severed fragment called the Calf of Man, by a narrow and rapid channel, here stretches its precipitous crags into the sea. After walking a couple of hundred yards farther, I stood on its brink.

From the number of sea birds already on the wing, one might reasonably have concluded that all were already abroad, and had left their homes; but as I approached the verge of the cliff, my advent was the signal of a general panic, testified first by the appearance of several shooting upwards from underneath, in parties of three or four at a time, till all at once an entire legion were dislodged, and darted aloft, projected into the air by terror, like a shower of stones from a volcano. In a moment the whole space of air on all sides, around and about, was one continued swarm of life and feathers. Meanwhile the old gulls, turning rapidly on the wing, and urged by parental solicitude, testified by their looks and actions the intense bond of union with their young, and their fearless determination to repel, even at the risk of their own lives, or at least awe their invader. Sometimes they would hover and flap their wings

only a few yards above my head ; and again, twisting downwards their bills, and shaking their feathers as it were in very spite, would swoop suddenly below, as if for the purpose of knocking off my hat. On the projections of the rock, perched among holes and crannies, sat the unfledged nestlings, the sole object of the old one's care—the centre and mainspring of clamour and gyration ; and there remained prudently waiting, as if wholly unconscious of danger, that critical moment of gull education, when the callow potbellied squab, after total transformation of being, may first securely dare to beat the air with his wings, and proudly soar aloft like the rest of his forefathers ;—an awful adventure, as in human life, and liable to sad reverse if tried too soon ; but the old gull well knows the exact moment to bid his son begone, and with a tickle under the tail, or a poke from the parent bill, for his patrimony, the proper instant, the period best befitting to introduce him to the troublesome world. If the young booby, like Icarus or Phaeton of old, undervaluing the experience of age, ventures to depart unbidden, just as certainly he cuts the thread of his own destiny, and prematurely finishes his vain-glorious career. Down he drops with a hard fall and a squelsh, ebowelled, on the hard ground, doomed miserably to perish amid the buzzing of blue-bottle flies, and deprived of the solace of funeral obsequies other than a garland of his own guts twisted about his ears.

Here I would readily have remained unsated by the sounds of undisturbed nature, or contentedly gazing upon massive abutments of earth and stone, fragments as it were of a crumbling world, were it not that the day was now fast waning, and

my homeward progress, moreover, mainly depended upon the vile dumb pony now long since tied to the wall. But it were vain to disregard realities to the preference of unsubstantial reflections; therefore, unwillingly bidding adieu to the ocean landscape, I retraced my steps by the way I had come, till I perceived the said pony standing still in indolent attitude, and precisely in the same spot where I had bidden him farewell. Nevertheless he had displaced several loose stones from the wall with his nose, and had otherwise done all the mischief he was conveniently able to perform; wherefore probably self-gratulation, and his own reflections, made him tranquil. A man and woman stood not far off, as correctly as I could judge, not very well pleased with his transactions, therefore as I considered that the wall belonged to these people, I was the more careful as I repaired the dilapidations, not merely to set each stone on its angular edge, so that a pair of cock sparrows in a pitched battle might destroy its equilibrium, but to do the job well, and place each block carefully on a solid point of resistance. And having thus performed the service, as in duty bound, I thought I had thenceforward a right to walk peaceably away.

The woman and her friend were, as it appeared, of a different opinion; for the former, without preface or apology, now stepped up with violent air and attitude, and began at once angrily to abuse me, in language sufficiently distinct and intelligible, though delivered in broken English, and in a tone not unlike that used by the Welsh peasantry. At all events I had the satisfaction of an explanation on matters that hitherto baffled my comprehension; and while she continued her harangue, the man, who spoke nothing but Manx,

remained all the time passively leaning his chin on the palms of both hands, supported by his elbows, upon the stone wall. In explicit terms, "She knew me very well," she said, "by my horse, to be one of those devils of Scotch doctors who went about the country spying into people's houses, poisoning all the wells, and, under the pretence of curing the cholera, pouring burning vitriol down poor people's throats, at the rate of five pounds a-head to be paid for the corpses. It was time," she farther added, working herself, of her own accord, to an extraordinary pitch of fury, "that an end should be put to all of us; and I might be sure," she said, "to meet my deserts as I passed through the village, for there the people were all ready and waiting to see me."

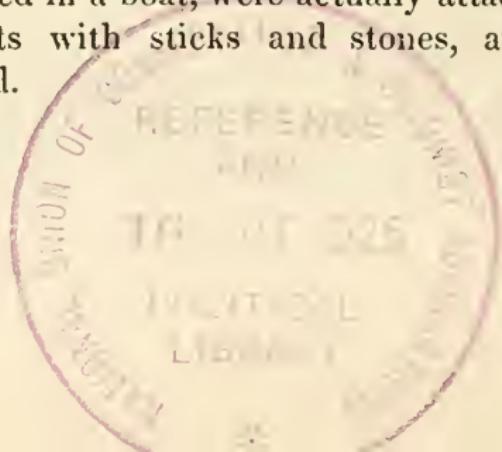
Finding that the simple nature of a superstitious class of people was excited by the precautionary measures adopted by the faculty, with regard to the prevention of the cholera, interfering as they imagined with the rites of sepulture, and that, whether justly or otherwise, this female was for the present so inflamed by rage, that, instead of a woman, had she been a steam engine she must inevitably, were it not for the aid of the safety valve, have burst the boiler, I thought it prudent to be silent while the hurricane continued to blow. After allowing her the free use of her tongue till she had expended all she had to say, I then replied as mildly as possible, "that she was from beginning to end quite mistaken,—that I was really no doctor, neither was I a wizard,—that I was a plain thinking individual, at all times inclined rather to be unmannerly than troublesome; but that since I had neither disturbed her's nor any other body's fire-side, so neither should any body deprive

me of my right to wander where I pleased in the fresh air and sunshine :" and having said these, or words to the same effect, without producing much visible impression, I mounted my narrow-backed pony and rode away. Had I been alone, and unencumbered with the villainous steed, I would rather have made a circuit at any risk, so that I could have gone home any other way than through the village. As it was, the measure was inevitable. There was no resource. Meanwhile I regarded the animal in the light of my bane, and the evil genius that had shed a sinister influence on all my proceedings ever since I had been in his company. Owing to his identity, I had fallen into disrepute with the ladies of Poolvash, and now in the character of "*le medicin malgre lui*," I was about, from the same cause, to undergo perhaps still farther discomfiture. Most willingly I would have walked home on foot, and have left the brute behind ; for, so far from rendering me assistance in case the enemy should attack in force, his presence would inevitably prove a main incumbrance. Nevertheless, hemmed in by the sea, and confined to the beaten track, with only a small switch in my hand, I rode towards the village.

Sure enough, as I approached the houses, a party had actually assembled to meet me, ten or a dozen or more ; but, to my satisfaction, I observed that every one of these were women. Not a single male personage, except myself, was at this moment to be seen in the village ; wherefore, although I was certainly only one against a host, and, as poets sing, the seat of mercy dwells afar from woman's heart, I forbore at all events to apprehend the meed of violence at women's hands : at least, whatever on the present

occasion might have been my want of confidence, I took good care to betray to the parties no such sort of feeling. On the contrary, whipping along the garron pony to a speed equal to full five miles an hour, and riding straight forward to the best looking of the group, I paid her an explicit but well-merited compliment on the score of her beauty; and while she was relating the exact words of my address to her busily enquiring sisterhood, I lost no time to leave the subject in discussion, and ride away. It were well always in affairs of gallantry, if people would profit by a proper opportunity of taking themselves off, and make up their minds to rest content with what they have gained: in accordance with this sentiment and satisfied to live in the good graces of these females for a solitary instant, away I rode, without receiving farther molestation. Not looking behind me, as I left them in the distance, I wished, as the fast-flitting shadows of the day's incidents passed across my mind, I might never, on any future occasion, feel more cause for self-reproach; and I recalled to my mind the stanzas of the poet, who, without other mortal weapon than the ægis of harmless intent, scared a grizzly wolf within his native woods, by a strain to his Lalage.

On my return to Castleton I found I had cause for congratulation, thus to have fallen in with the ladies, instead of meeting with men. I there learnt that the very day before, a party of visitors to the spot, who arrived in a boat, were actually attacked by the inhabitants with sticks and stones, and severely maltreated.



CHAPTER III.

ISLE OF MAN.

A Ride to Peel Town—Agriculture—St. John's—Tynwald Mount—The Ceremony of Tynwald—The Fair—Peel Town—Fishermen—The Quay—Peel Castle—Old Tom—An ingenious Expedient—The Cavern.

THE perambulation of the Isle of Man is better performed, walking excepted, on the back of a horse, than in any other way. The mode usually adopted by strangers, is, joining in a party of three or four, to drive together in an open vehicle, by a route which is said to be, *par excellence*, round the island, but which route, from causes already adverted to, is very far indeed within its extreme periphery. At the present time, speaking literally and accurately, as to a road round the Isle of Man, there is no such thing. Two-horse stage coaches, starting three or four times a week, perform regular journeys between all the principal towns, and carriages as aforesaid are let out on hire; but the times are not yet ripe for the luxury of a Manx postchaise.

Having selected, from among a dozen or more tolerably good hacks, arranged together in a row in the stalls of the principal livery stable, the animal that pleased me best, I got upon his back at Douglas, and made my way quietly and at my leisure along the road to Peel Town, situated on the opposite coast, eleven miles distant directly in a straight line across the island. The road, which is all the way Macadamised, rises immediately from the town, and

pursues its course over uneven hilly ground, although the altitude of the acclivities might easily be reduced were the pains and expense usually adopted in England here employed to that end; in fact, the whole of this tract, after all, in reality lies low, so as from a ship at sea, as before observed, to be hardly perceptible. On both sides of the road, is a range of low, round, grassy mountains, the land about their bases being divided by stone walls in fields, which are partially cultivated nearly to the top. Small as are the mountains, as regards the prospect, the country deserves the name of a mountainous district, since it makes little difference in ordinary cases, whether hills be high or low—whether the spectator comprehends the whole outline of a smaller range, or stands among the towering Apennines and views only a part. The grass, the farmers say, on these hills is sour, and so in fact it is, for want of sufficient stock; nevertheless the range is ample, and the breed of sheep small and hardy, although hitherto unassisted by winter keep, or encouraged to breed on the pastures in sufficient abundance.

Within the base of these mountains, on both sides of the road, is a considerable extent of cultivated land, whereof the soil is probably the poorest in all the island. The style of agriculture is consequently slovenly, so much so, that in many places the farmers merely scratch with the plough the middle of the field, and leave for a headland a space all round as wide as an ordinary turnpike road. Want of capital generally prevails; and the landholders, almost one and all, are induced to become the more careless, inasmuch as a great part of their time and care is devoted to the herring fishery. The hay is

made as in the north of England, or in Ireland, and allowed, after being cut, to remain on the ground long enough to spoil by the evaporation of the juices ; a miserable practice, whereby the poor cattle are the main sufferers. One excellent and striking example of good farming in the midst of this bad system, has been laid before the Manx farmers by a Scotsman. I observed one entire farm not far from Peel Town, where, solely by attention and good management, the aspect of the land is altogether changed, and the whole extent of the domain marked by very superior neatness and care. The fields are thrown open, the fences improved, and the ordinary quantity of live stock much increased ; it were only to be wished that the land in this part were by its quality able, as for the present it is not, I fear, to repay this individual's exertions.

Nine miles from Douglas, and two miles from Peel Town, is the small village of St. John's, a point whence two roads branch off, the one to the north and the other to the south, being those before alluded to, that form what is incorrectly called the circuit of the island : at this spot the traveller necessarily finds himself while on his way, as far removed as two miles from the sea.

Here is to be seen the ancient Tynwald Mount, whereon, from time immemorial, the laws of the island have been at regular periods promulgated to the people ; without which ceremony, the laws so promulgated, even at the present enlightened age, are not valid. The dimensions of the mount, and the proceeding altogether, is a remnant of Saxon barbarism, which it seems strange should have been permitted at all after the existence of steam navigation.

At present the representative of royalty performs an exhibition in the open air, more in character with his majesty of Norwood; and a grave legislative body discharge primeval functions, better fitted to those related of the savages in the pages of Captain Cook. Such is literally the case; and though on these occasions a country fair is held at the same time and place, the days of Tynwald are regularly advertised in the provincial newspapers. The governor of the island proceeding thither in state, attended by the house of keys, his parliament, the deemsters or judges, and the bishop, the cortège, after attending divine service in a small adjacent chapel, an humble edifice, from whose gable a tiny, tinkling bell, such as is seen in remote places of worship among our mountain districts, swings in the open air, take their places on the mount.

The mount is a sort of circular tumulus or mound, with concentric terraces rudely formed and overgrown with grass, rising one above another all the way to the top; that is to say, there are perhaps three or four, for the mount altogether is a mighty diminutive affair, such as might serve for a pedestal for the statue at Charing Cross, or answer the purpose of a pulpit for an itinerant preacher. However, the governor and the whole court, winter or summer, rain or shine, dispose themselves in state thereon. The governor sits on the top in his chair, the rest stand ranged below on the terraces around, and all are equipped in the proper paraphernalia of robes, wigs, and gowns. Keys, council and clergy there stand, if the weather be bad, exposed to the rain, while an ordinary canvass awning, and no more, is stretched between the inclement sky and the person of the

governor. The newly made laws are then read to the assembled multitude, in English and Manx.

It must be confessed, that there can be few spots in the world better calculated to afford a prospect of whatever may be transacted thereupon, to a multitude, indefinite in numbers, than the Tynwald mount, for it forms the centre of an amphitheatre of surrounding mountains, that rise one above another in the distance, at the extent of a radius varying from one to two miles in length.

I intended, but was accidentally prevented, to witness the proceedings on the mount, one Tynwald day. When I arrived, the people were busy at the fair, though the authorities had all departed. The assemblage, from their dress and manners, reminded me of the ordinary class of visitors at a fair in the north of Ireland; and indeed, the male population bear much affinity to the Irish in disposition; they are alike kind, and hospitable, independent, and frugal; retaining one special advantage over their Hibernian neighbours, that of being less addicted to intemperance. Here was to be seen a crowd of quiet, decently dressed, country people, some with eggs and butter to sell, others leading cows here and there, backwards and forwards, by straw ropes in quest of a purchaser, or vending potatoes swung on the back of a horse in straw panniers; but all, if not looking on and acting the part of "a sweetener" in a neighbour's bargain, at least earnestly engaged in driving one of their own, or minding their own business. Matters nevertheless were being conducted on a small scale, for all the live stock in the fair might be comprised in a dozen rough yearling, or two year old colts, and a score of small horned

cattle. “What of the laws that were read to-day?” said I to a peasant as he was grappling the nose of a calf and urging it forward through the crowd, at the same time twisting with the other hand the reeling animal’s tail. “What of the laws?” said he repeating my words impatiently, and turning away his attention entirely to the calf. “Ay,” said I, “I suppose you heard all that was read at the mount?” “Oh pack of stuff,” said he, “’twas about potatoes.” His tone of voice at the same time declared plainly that he troubled himself little in the concerns of the legislature; and, moreover, many the Manx rural swain at the present day, were he called upon to say whether England’s prime minister were Whig or Tory, no doubt in like manner is unable to answer the question.

The awning on the mount, under which the governor had recently sat, was merely a rough piece of canvass supported on poles, certainly by no means so well fashioned, as in England is afforded to the spectators at a cricket match, or by the landlord of a rural pothouse to the frequenters of his skittle-alley.

On leaving St. John’s, a prospect is within a short distance obtained of the broad sea, and on arriving at Peel Town, indications are at once manifest of a neat, lively, compact, fishing establishment. Whether farmers or fishermen, it is pleasing to see men existing in a state of full occupation, and here the inhabitants are so active and stirring, that each seems to think and act, just as if the town and all that is in it belonged to himself. One may frequently see, at the height of the fishing season, three hundred little fishing vessels at one time in the harbour, and on the

present day, the quay was crowded with small craft of different descriptions. Here, side by side, were the single masted Manx boat, and the Cornish fisherman's sturdy two-masted lugger, which in piscatory excursions include within their ocean range the shores of Ardglass on the coast of Ireland ; and soaring preeminent above these, the red vane of the Liverpool herring merchant's top masted sloop, floated in the breeze. By the latter vessels, the fish are taken to England to be cured, a practice which renders them inferior in the market, and which is likely to be discontinued, since curing houses, of which formerly there were none on the spot, are now in progress of being built.

Notwithstanding the appearances of business, the Manx men, like people in all parts of the world, find time for grumbling. They say the smoke and whizzing of the steam-boats has frightened away the fish, and owing to that cause alone they declare that the herrings are not near so abundant as formerly. But I think it may be presumed, that so long as the Cornish fishermen leave their own homes to fish on these distant grounds, their presence is in some wise a criterion towards an opposite conclusion. The life of a fisherman, notwithstanding all their hardships, so long as, poor fellows, they have capital, is independent and exhilarating ; for at one and twenty he is his own commander, and the privilege of apprenticeship, is a roving commission over the British dominions. His boat his castle, self-will sitting at the helm, directs its course over the manor of the wide sea. In authority, moreover, over few subjects indeed, he enjoys at any rate supremacy, for even though three or four red worsted night-caps

cover the heads of all his crew, no man on board dare dispute his will, more than were his commands uttered through the speaking trumpet of some tall admiral.

The boats in the river form a still more dense cluster, inasmuch as the very small stream, from its limited dimensions, contains little harbour space. On the opposite bank, the green hills above are converted to a drying ground for the nets, which generally are spread over the grass to a considerable extent, and cartloads are frequently arriving on the quay, to be ferried across for the same purpose. Seaward, the bold bluff coast to the north terminates by a headland not unlike that of Dungeness in Kent; but the magnificent rock at the mouth of the river, and the noble old castle that stands thereon frowning over the waters, engage one's whole attention. The aforesaid rock, the site of Peel Castle, celebrated by Scott in *Peveril of the Peak*, is an island, whereof the sea only a few years since washed every part of its base. For the protection of the harbour, a wedgelike wall, or mound of stone, has since been built, so as to connect it with the main land, and to form together with the rock a continued bank of the river. On the opposite side, the said wall forms the head of a sandy shelving little bay, where the sea, clear as crystal, and sheltered by the rock and castle on one side, and by the high land rising abruptly from the water's edge on the other, affords a spot as lovely for the purposes of bathing, were it to be so appropriated, as the imagination can conceive.

My chief object at present being to see the interior of the venerable castle, I had previously been in search of the personage entrusted with the keys, and the

result of my expedition transported me to this spot for the purpose of being ferried across to the rock, whither the aforesaid functionary, whether governor, seneschal, or what not, but universally known throughout the whole town, by the name of "Old Tom," had already proceeded. As no admittance to the castle can possibly be gained without "Old Tom," I had gone in the first instance to his private dwelling, whence I heard he had only a few minutes before departed to the castle in charge of a party.

Stepping now into a boat, the boy, handling a single oar at the stern like the tail of an eel, sculled me in a few turns of the wrist across the river, whence I landed on the rude naked rock, the remnant of an ancient flight of steps, of which it is now difficult to distinguish those artificial, from the work of nature. Above, the ancient door of massive timber in good preservation, being wide open, I walked in.

"Old Tom" was at this time engaged in doing the honours of his vocation to some half dozen persons, male and female, whom he was haranguing with consequential demeanour, leading the way by turns to the ruins of the guard-room haunted by "the spectre hound," and thence to the sally-port whence "the Countess of *Darby*," as he said, "made her escape with her *servant* maid Fenella," and thence afterwards to the dungeon or crypt, an oblong vault, supported by thirteen pointed arches, now nearly filled up by earth and rubbish, within whose dreary walls, the Duchess of Gloucester ended her days under the gaolership of Sir John Stanley. Upon all these reliques of antiquity "Old Tom" dwelt with a precision that savoured of former military habits, and a prolixity, much increased by the too liberal aid of

whiskey ; and upon every point of authority, he quoted Sir Walter Scott, as if neither before nor since, there ever existed another historian. For himself, "forty years had he been" he said "in his Majesty's service," which assertion, as he wore an artillery coat on his back, and had only one eye in his head, was in point of fact the more likely to be true. Whatever became of his lost eye, old Tom never declared the story to his hearers ; if not poked out by the enemy's bayonet, it probably perished suddenly by the explosion of gunpowder ; indications of violence were however indisputably evident, of some sort or other, for the job was as it were after all only half performed, and done badly ; that is to say, the empty socket looked as if the crows that plucked out part of the eye, had left the remainder.

Upon all matter of circumstantial narration, the visitors now present seemed to place implicit credence ; neither are the means at hand available to counteract old Tom's testimony ; no ancient inscription, not even a single letter remains on the walls, or on any part of the ruins to afford information ; the entire building meanwhile, as regards the state of preservation, being rather more dilapidated than Rochester Castle in Kent. Within two unroofed chapels appertaining to the domain are several tomb-stones of modern date, in memory of shipwrecked persons, who, according to custom under such contingencies, have there from time to time been buried ; obsequies, humble as they may appear, paid to the dead nevertheless at the expense of no little trouble and toil to the living ; for not only is the ceremony performed in a spot particularly exposed to the wind and the rain in tempestuous weather, but

the corpse, mourners, and clergyman, are all necessarily previously ferried thither across the river in a boat.

The aspect of the tilting yard covered by a light green carpet of vegetative sward, such as, though commonly seen within ancient castles, is never equalled by art either in the lawn or bowling green, fronts the western sea, on a spot elevated and unsheltered, based on the rugged rock, whose area is altogether about four English acres; whence the waves of the sea below, in stormy weather bounding far above the summit into the air, sweep across to windward in incessant clouds of mist and spray. Here in sunshine and in summer it is delightful to sit and listen to the roar of the waves, to inhale the fragrant freshness of the sea, and observe how upon the surface of the weather beaten ruins, the tempest and the hurricane have by degrees effected a change, which in somewise assists and co-operates with the destroying hand of time. The wind and the rain, acting upon the broken walls, as well as upon heaps of the fallen material, have here and there invested the surface with a coating of sand, shell, and soil, whereupon herbage has subsequently sprung, till the whole has become an indistinct mass, and almost indeterminable whether it be now formed of earth or stone. Sufficient probably by and by, after a lapse of years, to puzzle the antiquary. Of such examples there are many, but of one in particular, a sort of oblong, elevated grave-stone, surrounded on three sides by a rude continuous seat, I must take more especial notice; for the above structure, covered by a coating of herbage produced by the causes aforesaid, though it might very well be

mistaken for an hundred years old, was altogether raised by old Tom himself only a few years ago, and is a striking instance, how, in matters of antiquity, trivial causes, if unknown and unrecorded, may in time possibly become confounded with more important agency.

From the site of this edifice or mound, salubrious and airy, only a few yards removed from the verge of the lofty rock, is had an uninterrupted view of the sea, and here is a spot long since chosen whereon to spread a table and display their viands, by the pic nie parties who in the summer think proper to visit Peel Castle, on their tour round the island. For these assemblages of persons, consisting of various and different descriptions of company, Old Tom accordingly partly provided for the revelry, furnishing especially a deal table and chairs without delay to all who required them. Irishmen in particular were used here to congregate, and hold wassail amid clouds of tobacco, till becoming more and more elevated, owing to the thin air or the whiskey, or enlivened by early associations connected with the enchanting prospect in clear weather before them, of the shores of old Ireland, it invariably happened some how or other in the end, that they always grew riotous and noisy. Thence it followed inevitably, when the liquor was expended, and the fact is attested by woeful experience of the purveyor, the furniture being light, and the fists of the revellers heavy, that whatever consequences otherwise ensued, at any rate the wooden tables and chairs, as sure as a gun, were smashed at the close of the entertainment. Some choice spirit or other, whether John Bull, Sandy Anderson, or Paddy from Cork, no matter, somebody however,

predestined, like Ascanius of old to demolish the tables,

“ *Heus etiam mensas consumimus inquit Iulus* ”

with a big thump and a crash accordingly brought matters always to the aforesaid conclusion. Old Tom, merely by the help of his one eye, at once perceived that reform was necessary, and that to meet the wants of his company, and suit the interests of his pocket as regarded tables and chairs, wood was altogether too fragile a material. Thus driven to resources, he invented a substitute, such as I have already adverted to, whereby from the ruins of the castle, disposed in suitable array, he completed a table and seat of stone, and overlaid the same with turf, which, since pelted by the weather, already bears semblance of antiquity ; and in after ages, long after old Tom’s eye has ceased to wink, may perhaps be mistaken by the learned, for the tomb of some doughty warrior.

After viewing the castle, I returned to the boat, and rowing out of the harbour, entered a cavern, which perforates the rock for a long way under the foundations of the castle. This cavern is celebrated in Waldron’s history of the Isle of Man, for emitting a hollow subterraneous sound, produced by the waves of the sea, which re-bellow within, and enter roaring at its mouth. Sir Walter Scott, in *Peveril of the Peak*, alludes also to the same property of the cavern, the site of which, by the way, he sometimes confounds with that of Castle Rushen, twelve miles distant. As the day was clear, and the sea particularly calm, I was enabled to enter the aperture, a low arch resting upon the sea, wherein the spring and buoy-

ancy of the wave is so elastic, that it was with the greatest difficulty the boat was prevented from being beaten to pieces against the rocks. I should be sorry to repeat this experiment ; and after all, when within there is little to see ; however, the sound produced by the gurgling water within, was really extraordinary. The cavern is, perhaps, a score of feet in length, and a dozen feet high, ending in a chasin or channel, through which, as regards its size, one might drag the carcase of a dead bullock. Within this aperture, a volume of water, as the wave rises, rushes forwards for a long way with furious force, and as it falls, is disgorged back again, through the bowels of the rock ; thus sobbing at intervals, like the sound of a multitude of animals, the roaring of an hundred lions. Far within, in the distance, and in a line, evidently reaching under the castle, a guttural sound, stifled as it were for want of egress, increases by degrees, till it bursts forth at its mouth like the crash of a falling forest, or the din of a cataract. During the short time I remained within the cavern, the boat was lifted up and down by an exceedingly violent motion, whence the sides of the rock, by the friction of the waves, and their continual action, are rendered as polished as marble.

CHAPTER IV.

ISLE OF MAN.

A Benefit Society—A Manx Peasant—Waterfall of Glenmaye—Church and Church-yard of Kirk Patrick—Slate Tomb-stones—Waterfall of Foxdale—Foxdale Lead Mines—Slate Quarries at Barrule—Mills—Indigenous Mill-stone—Improved Aspect of the Country—Kirk Christ Rushen—Port Iron—A Night's Lodging in the Public-house—A rough Landing-place—Gulls protected—Brada Head—Lead Mines—Their extraordinary Position—Calf of Man—Beautiful Natural Quay—Rats and Rat-catchers—Aspect of the Island—Rabbits—Boswell's House.

IN a subsequent year to the period before alluded to at the commencement of my second Chapter, I took up my quarters for the night at the principal inn at Peel Town, intending from thence the next morning to proceed on an excursion on horseback, by a mountain route, again to the south of the island, where, as a great part was still unexplored, I entertained, particularly with regard to the inhabitants, in consequence of the events related in my former visit, not a little curiosity. Accordingly I proposed, after the morning's ride, to rest at night not far from Poolvash, at the little fishing village of Port Iron, and return on the third day to Peel Town, or Douglas.

I was provided at the inn with comfortable apartments, and experienced the same kind hospitable attention that one usually meets with at rural inns in England. As I rambled about the streets after an early dinner, I encountered a benefit society, who, on one of their days of festival, were marching in pro-

cession through the town, and I could not refrain from observing with satisfaction the brotherly feelings that seemed to animate this body of men. It were well if always, the demon of party spirit were strangled by the bond of union. For first and foremost, three and three, hand in hand, in token of amity and universal toleration, marched the clergyman of the parish, the dissenting minister, and another of the principal inhabitants. These were preceded by a band of music, and followed by the rest of the fraternity, walking two and two, each bearing a white wand ornamented with narrow strips of ribband, and for the remainder of the evening, in the streets of Peel Town, notwithstanding a convivial meeting was celebrated on the occasion, there appeared no deviation whatever from good order and sobriety.

After the procession had disappeared, I strolled leisurely into the country to see the waterfall of Glenmaye, three miles distant, which is considered by the inhabitants of the Isle of Man, where rivers are of small dimensions, a formidable cataract. I had proceeded a little way when I encountered a Manx peasant, who seemed comfortable after his dinner, and moreover mightily inclined to be sociable; so we walked along the road together. In fact he accosted me with an air of kindness and ease, as if I were an old acquaintance. "A fine evening, master," said he, holding out at the same time the hard hand of honesty, which I shook accordingly, for it was tendered in good fellowship, and in a manner not devoid of grace, as an action sincerely intended, and of ordinary habit. My new friend, however, inquisitive to a superlative degree, asked

me all manner of questions. Whereupon, resolving to be even with him, "Who made your coat?" said I, abruptly looking steadily on the garment he wore on his back, of blue coarse cloth, such as is commonly used among the Welsh peasantry, his trousers moreover were loose, and of the same material. "Who made my coat?" said he, repeating my words crustily, and looking keenly in my face, to see whether or not I were quizzing him; however, as I kept my gravity, "Why who the devil d'ye think made it? It was made at home;" added he rather reservedly. "And the cloth?" said I. "That was made at home too," said he. Having obtained the required information, I readily replied to all further interrogations, and then by degrees he became in his turn, good humoured and communicative. He paid eight pounds a year he said, for six acres of ground adjoining his own cottage, nor had he ever in his life been out of the island. "I was born," said he, "in that very house, and my father lives there still;" and then he pointed to a little hovel in the distance embedded among the mountains, and so small, that it really looked like a haycock.

Having left him to descend the bank of the ravine leading to the waterfall, I scrambled through the bushes by a zigzag path, in some places almost perpendicular, and found myself in a few minutes standing on the bank of the small basin or pool of the cascade, serenaded by a cloud of mosquitoes.

The jet of the cataract during freshes from the mountains, possesses no mean capabilities of display, but the stream at present falling from a height of about twenty feet, might have been contained in a

cylindrical pipe of a foot diameter. The features of the glen, expanding towards the sea, produce an effect of space not here to be expected, and in the variety of landscape, thence spots are to be selected, for almost every description of rural habitation ; the elevated mountain, the craggy ravine, the bluff cliffs of the sea shore, the bubbling stream, or the lowly valley.

On my return to Peel Town, I visited the church-yard of the diminutive village church of Kirkpatrick, where, on many a grave-stone, formed of slate split from the rude rock, I observed inscriptions apparently scratched with a common nail or spike, as far back as the year 1744 and 5, which, though continually exposed horizontally on the ground to the open air, were still perfectly legible ; and slate-stone, no doubt, from its smooth texture, notwithstanding its softness, is more durable as a grave-stone, and retains characters longer than harder material. Slate-stone in the Isle of Man is not only abundant, but, for every possible purpose to which it can be applied with economy, is universally used. The lintels of doors, the porches of cottages, the gate-posts in the farm-yards and fields, and the mooring posts for vessels on the quays, are all made of slate-stone ; and it is only extraordinary, that, being impervious to water, and fissile in quality, it is only of late years that people have become aware of its general utility. Now cisterns in Lambeth, and in many places other important articles, such as billiard-tables, and what not, are made of slate-stone ; and in point of fact, there is hardly any part of a human dwelling, within or without, from the roof to the foundation,

beams, rafters, and all, that might not if required, be readily sawn, planed, and bored, the same almost as in wood, from blocks of native slate-stone.

The next morning I mounted my nag, and proceeded on my intended way by the Douglas road as far as St. John's, whence, turning to the right, I made progress to the village of Foxdale, about seven miles from Peel Town. Here also, adjoining the road, is a waterfall, superior, I think, and at all events easier of access, than that of Glenmaye. The fall is higher, and the space below is planted with fine young trees,—an inviting spot whereon to pass the time in shade, during the sultry day. The cascade, propelled from above through a chasm of slate-stone rock, whereof by its friction it has rounded and polished the edges, pursues afterwards its course at the bottom, through a self-cut bed of the same material, indented, and worn smooth withal, as the work of human hands. With my horse's bridle on my arm, such was the clear blue colour of the natural trough, and the translucent clearness of the stream, that I could readily have loitered here a long time, even self-acquitted of the charge of indolence; but like water, so is life; lovely in tranquillity, and lovelier still by motion and variety. Profiting by this sentiment, and accordingly contented with what I had seen, I remounted my horse and rode away.

I was now among the mountains; and quitting the road on the left or east, proceeded forthwith towards the Foxdale lead-mines, over a wide expanse covered with heather, whereon a few years ago, grouse were tolerably plentiful, and even now in the winter, are plenty of snipes and wood-

cocks. These mines are church property, at present rented of the bishop by the Chester mining company, who have recently undertaken to work them, notwithstanding the whole surface of the ground being a morass, the operation of pumping the water out of the shafts is rendered more precarious, and moreover every ton of coal for the use of the steam-engine is unavoidably carted seven miles, almost every foot of the way uphill, from Douglas. It is in contemplation to sink for coal, and, they say, with expectation of success. At any rate, the ore is rich enough to induce people to work the mines under all disadvantages. Hitherto, labour has been chiefly exhausted in preparation. I observed a steam-engine of forty-six horse power applied to the purpose of pumping one shaft; a water-wheel of forty-one feet diameter in another, and not far apart from these, another large water-wheel and shaft.

Within a mile of the lead-mines, are the extensive slate-quarries of Barrule, whence slate of the finest quality is procured and transported toward other parts of the island. The site of the quarries is so elevated as to afford a view, in a clear day, of the coasts of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, altogether; nevertheless it is a curious fact, brought by the opportunity of a prospect so unintercepted to one's observation, that notwithstanding the whole country is as much exposed to the wind as it is deficient in water, yet all the mills are water-mills, I think with only one exception. In the south, near Castleton, there is certainly one wind-mill, and if there be another, which I doubt, it is at all events in the north of the island. The water-mills, such as they are, are usually of exceedingly small power, those

of Granaby, where three or four pair of stones are driven, being I believe the largest establishment of any; they are generally situated in secluded situations on the mountain rivulets, where, were it not for the water-wheel that scatters the stream in the sunshine, the spectator as he passes along, would overlook, from its diminutive proportions, the low-roofed cottage itself. Hitherto the supply of water for mechanical power is everywhere as precarious as nature first designed it; and abundant quantities during rainy seasons are wasted in the sea, that might readily be economised by means of artificial lakes and reservoirs, so as to increase equably the mill-streams to an indefinite amount. At present, so far from such means having been adopted by experimental or speculative persons for their own, or the public interest, with the exception of drainage for ordinary purposes in another part, no work worthy of notice has been performed; neither is there a lake, or large pond, either natural or artificial, within the limits of the island.

Besides the slate here dug, a hard stone is found in abundance, usually in large loose blocks near the surface of the ground; it nearly resembles the French burr, and though not quite so hard, answers the purpose of inferior mill-stones; from this material almost every one of the mills is supplied with one pair of stones, wherewith barley and oats are ground.

From this commanding eminence the country below to the southward, including the whole distance to Castleton Bay, consists of a wide tract of rich alluvial soil, spreading from the mountain's base to the sea, where agricultural opulence and rural comfort

are contrasted in pleasing diversity to the country about Douglas or Peel Town. Larger farms and more extensive fields, whereon lime is used abundantly as a manure; and comfortable looking white-washed houses, so profusely scattered over the land as to create the appearance of a continuous, straggling village, take place of the meagre features of the aforesaid barren district.

Hence I descended, passing by the Granaby mills before mentioned, which mills lie low in a pleasant glen, and traversing the alluvial space just alluded to by the neat village of Colby, and the church and church-yard of Kirk Christ Rushen, where the grave-stones equal, number for space, those in any cemetery I every saw; I rode on in a direction straight between the cliffs of Brada and of Spanish Head, and took up my quarters, as previously intended, on the sea-shore, at the small fishing village of Port Iron. Of the cottages, two are public-houses, and in number about a score, occupy altogether a shelving sandy beach, at the head of a narrow bay, both sides of which are bounded by towering rocks of considerable elevation. There is no quay or landing place other than is formed by craggy projections of the aforesaid rocks, so well adapted by nature to the purpose, that for small craft, the fishermen can hardly require better accommodation.

The woman of the public house, whose husband was absent, when I rode up to the door, kindly undertook to provide me a lodging for the night, and fare as good as the premises afforded; and consigned, by the hands of a bare-legged boy who acted as hostler, my horse to the stable. Here I saw him deposited within an empty shed, wherein the former tenants,

the cows, had profusely left behind the means of cooling his feverish hoofs, and I moreover presented him with an ample feed of good oats, though fortune was not equally favourable with regard to fodder. At all events I obtained the best I could, for I consider it a duty to see the poor tired horse well provided in all his wants, while under our charge. Providence has placed an animal for the time being under our especial guardianship, and he certainly fails, in a sense both moral and religious, who, not only withholds from the patient slave his hard earned right, but subjects him by consequent weakness, to say nothing of the present pains of hunger, to unmerited punishment as a laggard, by the whip of a future master.

For my own part, as regarded a dormitory, I felt much inclined to leave matters to the good will of my hostess, and to chance ; for a glimpse of the dwelling on entering the door, made it plain to perceive, that the shape of the upper rooms was precisely regulated by the slant of the roof ; in short, that, divided as they might be by partitions, the whole house was, in point of fact, composed only of a kitchen and a cock-loft. There was, it is true, a small den called a parlour, of which the door, not being intended to shut, afforded no protection with regard to privacy, so that I could hear every word of the conversation of a group of fishermen, who, rough as banditti, were seated drinking in the kitchen. The colloquy was held in English and in Manx, sometimes in one language, and occasionally in both together ; and not only in the above respect, but in manners also, a striking difference is perceptible here between the inhabitants of the southern, and those of the other parts of the island. It is extraordinary

in these civilized times, that pains should be anywhere taken, by preserving these ancient tongues, to nourish ignorance and perpetuate barbarism, to preserve contrary to natural laws, by associations and otherwise, provincial dialects originally proper to inaccessible and mountainous districts, which, as communication extends among mankind, would, if left to themselves, die a natural death. However, in the Isle of Man, the steam navigation is quickly overpowering every effort to retain the native literature, and the Manx tongue every year is becoming less and less used. In the mean time, where it prevails, the people are certainly proportionately wilder and more uncivilized in their appearance, than in those parts where it is utterly extinct; and no wonder; for though it really seems absurd to believe yet such is really the case, the peasant, at the end of one morning's walk, transports himself beyond the reach of his mother tongue. The same remark may be applied to the Basque territory in Spain.

The first measure I adopted, having taken quiet possession of my parlour, was to order dinner, and here I experienced some inconvenience from excess of civility, for I was unable, by all the arguments in my power, to persuade my landlady to prepare herrings for my repast, since she had predetermined to serve up, by way of a treat, a mess of fried bacon and eggs. The former, the staple of the village, though in profusion, and excellent, being considered in the light of a gratuitous gift of the ocean, were undervalued accordingly. In the mean time the good woman had already tucked up her sleeves, and in earnest set to work in her vocation; acting in the double capacity of cook and nurse at

one and the same time, besides supplying occasionally her thirsty customers with drink. Under one arm she supported a sucking baby, as if it were a wheat-sheaf; with a fork in the other hand, she turned over and over, from side to side, the hissing bacon in the frying-pan. A lively little maiden, ever on the alert, was continually running up and down the cellar stairs to draw beer for the fishermen; and an aged creature, the mother of the landlady, cold and comfortless, and by surviving all human sympathies grown peevish and helpless, sat drowsily, as it were in token of the monotonous tenor of her own existence, rocking a new-born infant in its cradle. Poor old soul, she longed for relief from mortal trouble, and scrupled not to say so, telling me moreover she was eighty-eight years old and full of misery. With a view to comfort her amid her complainings, "many years you may live yet," said I, whereupon with a scream of agony, and a look of horror, she entreated me with emphatic earnestness by no means to say so; with some reason, no doubt, if repose were her object, for here at the close of life, instead of repose, the unfortunate granny was doomed to bewilderment, stunned by the din of tongues, and jostled by old and young. The bare-legged boy, just returned from the stable, obedient to every body's bidding, had taken again his place among the company, and stood by the fire with a healthy honest face, and looks that candidly declared him capable of eating, if nobody were by, every egg and rasher in the frying-pan.

Notwithstanding the fishermen were rude and noisy in demeanour, they were scrupulously kind and observant towards the females: of these there

were none other present than those of the household, but of guests, near a score before night made their appearance. When I returned after an evening walk, I found things precisely in the state I left them, except that people were perhaps a little more argumentative than before.

As my door declined to shut, I sat with it wide open, the better to see the company; and still farther derogating from the majesty of solitude, as I had hitherto invariably met with civility, in order on my part to conform to the fashion of things around, I desired a pint of beer to be set on the table before me; and thus employed I remained till near ten o'clock, when as I was thinking of going to rest, I saw three men with blackened faces standing outside the window. I was staggered for an instant at their sudden appearance, consequently concluding that under such a disguise—the men's faces being as black as coal-heavers'—mischief surely was intended. With reference to myself and to former adventures in the neighbourhood, I really sincerely wished I had let well alone, and, having escaped once prosperously from the hands of the inhabitants, had now staid away. However, I remained not long in suspense, for the three men burst into the outer room, where their appearance was immediately hailed with an universal hollabaloo. They were miners by trade, young men of the village, casually employed to unload a vessel freighted with coal from Ayr, in Scotland, and now in their masquerade costume, after a severe day's work, afforded merriment owing to their appearance, and quickly made manifest their own particular object, by calling for refreshment. Employed in the lead-mines at Brada Head, their

services had been temporarily called to another department; for the vessel lay at anchor near the cliff, under a brisk off-shore gale, during the continuance of which, it was indispensable that the job should be quickly completed, for, at that part of the coast, at no other season dare a vessel at anchor maintain her position. The young men, accordingly, had laboured unremittingly, as if the sloop and cargo had actually belonged to themselves, since four o'clock in the morning during the entire summer's day; and again on the morrow, at the same early hour, were about to renew their toil. The animated bearing of the young Manxmen in question beamed brightly through the mask of coal-dust and perspiration that deformed their countenances, as, highly pleased with themselves and all things about them, they rioted in the mere enjoyment of existence—a delight that the young and powerful alone can know, when the elastic fibre serenely reposes after severe exertion, and the moral sense, proportionately wide awake, exults in its prowess. Though wild in his gait, than the English peasant the Manxman is a vast deal more volatile and airy, and though all now conversed in the *patois* of the island, in wit and hilarity, and in mental calibre, I saw plainly they far exceeded our native clowns. None of the party, notwithstanding the merriment, in anywise exceeded the bounds of sobriety, but in good order and fellowship, before eleven o'clock, all had beat their retreat. The latch of the door having then performed its last office, once more a member of a peaceful family, I retired to rest.

To my comfort and surprise, the preparations of my hostess very far exceeded all previous expecta-

tion ; and though I mounted a staircase which resembled a ladder, I found ready with curtains and coverlid, a bed stuffed with harsh straw and clad with coarse sheets, but, like every thing else in the apartment, tidy, and scrupulously clean. Indeed such was the vigilance displayed for the sake of even the semblance of decency, that I actually dislodged sundry articles, including a bran new cheese and an old pack of cards, craftily deposited in ambush between the bed and the tester.

At daybreak in the morning I walked down to the bay, where I was speedily joined by the owner of a boat with whom I had previously made arrangements, and his two assistants. As we approached the skiff, which lay moored to the rocks, we were surrounded by numerous gulls that hovered close above our heads, all of which were so tame, that being on the ground, and walking about at their leisure on the sea-shore, they took little notice as we passed, but flapping their wings gently, either in compliment to us, or to recreate themselves, merely made believe to rise. Protected by the fishermen, the law of the land inflicts a penalty of three pounds upon whomsoever, either wilfully or wantonly, shoots one of their race ; and such, accordingly, is the good understanding between those of the heavy boots and the web-footed, that the latter here in the neighbourhood of Port Iron, walk about as securely and peaceably as ordinary ducks in a farm-yard. The keen eye of the gull when the herrings appear, enables him to discover the first twinkle of their scales, and detect the myriads that swim crowding together beneath the wave ; and collecting in flocks, they hover over the spot, continually marking, by

their progress in the air, the finny phalanx below. The sagacious manœuvre infuses life in the village, and the fishermen receive the signal with joy. Ever on the alert, they throw their nets in the boat, and when after the toilsome day they return laden to their homes, the auxiliary gulls receive the reward of their services in the small fry and garbage.

The access to the landing-place is inconvenient and slippery. We ascended for some distance over craggy slabs of rock, then descended again to the level of the sea, and stepping into the boat, which floated in deep water, rowed out of the bay, and in a quarter of an hour were pulling with a steady stroke under the bluff lofty cliffs of Brada Head. This magnificent headland—a stupendous precipice—reminded me at first sight of the sea-girt rock of Ailsa Craig, on the coast of Galloway, and the resemblance is rendered more perfect by the legions of sea-birds that continually swarm upon its brow. Hither I had come to see the site of the lead-mines, the scene of operations of the three young miners before mentioned ; and I was sufficiently gratified, were it only to have gained a momentary glimpse of the operations here conducted. A situation more extraordinary for works like these is hardly to be found in the king's dominions ; for the mines, after a long interval, were at this time about to be re-opened, and a building to contain the steam-engine was in progress of erection. The site chosen for this purpose was an abutting point of the perpendicular cliff, inaccessible from below, and so near the water's edge, that even in moderate weather its foundation is unceasingly lashed by the waves. The masonry of the building is imbedded in the rock, and constructed with corre-

sponding solidity. The main level perforates the side of the cliff close to the aforesaid engine-house, and other levels, far above among the sea birds' habitations, are also about to be re-opened and worked afresh. The access from the village to the lower level first mentioned, is by a perilous zigzag path, that descends the greater part of the way from the extreme summit of the cliff, until becoming absolutely precipitous, the remainder of the distance is completed by a tunnel.

A few fathoms from the shore the collier sloop, of which mention has already been made, rolling and toppling on the wave, and desperately rocking from side to side, held on by a heavy strain upon her anchor; and hence to the engine-house, the coal, as fast as unladen, was first conveyed to the base of the cliff in a boat, and then in sacks, upon men's shoulders, was carried to the engine-house some forty or fifty feet above. The young miners and eight or ten more labourers were already merrily progressing at their work, and engaged in a service utterly impracticable but for the strength and energy of youth. By means of planks laid from crag to crag, some resting unsteady, and all at great elevation, every sack of coal was transported from point to point, across the intervening chasms, and now and then among uneven ledges of rock; so that even with caution and difficulty, and unimpeded by any burden, I could scarcely follow the laden men up the craggy steep. The object once attained, I speedily came down again; but not before recognized by my black-muzzled acquaintance, who with hearty good humour, and a spread of white teeth, as I stepped into the boat gave signal to the rest, who altogether, mistaking me

I suppose for an inspecting proprietor, greeted my departure with a lusty hurrah ; or perhaps it was mere gratitude for a little contribution, always considered meritorious—namely, a trifle bestowed to purchase strong beer.

Once more in the boat, the boatmen doffed their jackets, and laying sturdily to the oars, pulled across the mouth of Port Iron bay to the Calf of Man. The sea was quite calm during the whole of the passage, which lasted three quarters of an hour ; for the wind blowing strong all the while from the shore, we were under the lee of the land. The passage to the Calf of Man from Port Iron is infinitely preferable to that from Port le Murray ; for in the latter case, the narrow gut is to be passed formed by the intervening little island of Kitterland, where always exists a bubbling turbulent swell. At present we skirted this fretting torrent, and passing close to the aforesaid Kitterland, whereon, though a mere speck in the sea, I observed a dozen sheep grazing, we landed upon the Calf of Man. Here is a small natural harbour, so sheltered and perfect, that as a place of landing for small craft, the assistance of art is hardly necessary for farther improvement. Within a narrow inlet, a basin of deep transparent water, from whose bottom the long succulent stems and broad spreading leaves of submarine plants sprout, waving backwards and forwards towards the surface, is surrounded on every side by high land ; and the rocks which form the landing, consisting of horizontal ledges, abruptly protrude from the shore into deep water ; so that a good sized sloop might here, without farther preparation, with the greatest facility either disembark or receive a cargo.

During the passage from Brada Head, I conversed with the boatmen on the subject of the island we were going to visit, and I was amused by their history, so little did they know of its merits or localities. On making enquiry at Douglas, only fourteen miles distant, few people whom I asked had ever been there; and one would be led to imagine, from general report, that it was a spot visited for no other reason than because two lighthouses are built upon it, and moreover, productive only in two staple articles—namely, sea birds' eggs and rabbits. The boatmen conformed to the latter account, and related exaggerated tales of the rats, that have colonized to destroy the rabbits. Of the former, they said that on a moonlight night some thousands regularly congregated at their gambols, and sometimes, when making war on each other, a multitude might be seen galloping in droves, or in squadron in order of battle. The proprietor of the rabbits, they farther declared, engaged a learned Scotsman from Edinburgh College, who, a few years ago, at a constant salary of forty shillings a week, undertaking to reside on the spot and extirpate the destroyers, for the space of four months received regular pay, and plied them meanwhile with oil of rhodium and deadly viands in profusion. In despite of his best efforts, however, the vermin in the end prevailed, and since baffled skill knows no mortal resource, the Scotsman accordingly left the island.

On disembarking from the boat, I found with some regret, that in accordance with other arrangements, the short period of time remaining at my disposal was limited to an hour and a half; enough, certainly, to traverse the track or road that passes from end to end

across the middle longitudinally, and to return by the same route, but insufficient leisurely to make a circuit of the lofty and magnificent cliffs. Nevertheless, at the conclusion of my ramble, I resumed my place in the boat under a perfectly different impression than when I set forward, for instead of a sandy desert, such as I had expected to see from the account I had heard, filled with rabbits and rats, on the contrary, the whole expanse rather teemed with vegetative power; and at any rate during my short sojourn, neither a single rabbit nor rat did I happen to see.

The ground rises immediately from the landing-place to a considerable elevation, towards the summit of which, slate-stone has already been dug from an abundant quarry. Hence the aforesaid road strikes directly across the whole length of the island, over a gently undulating surface, covered with luxuriant heather. Of this moor land there is apparently quite sufficient, were it stocked with grouse, to afford sport for a shooting party for an entire week; while the extraordinary strength of the heather—not harsh stunted plants, but consisting of rich blooming bushes, almost in many places up to one's middle—seems to indicate a soil that, under the discipline of the plough, might be subjected to much improvement. In fact, a great part of the island is now likely to be brought under tillage, having been purchased by an individual, as I understood, for three thousand pounds, who has built a farm-house and offices on a centrical spot, and brought an hundred acres at least under cultivation. The dwelling of this cacique or proprietor is a simple stone building, with farm-yard, barn, stable, and all appurte-

nances, the whole well supplied with water by a pump, from a spring a few yards only below the surface of the ground. The rabbits inhabit the south-western part of the territory. Of these I found upon enquiry that about seven hundred couple are taken every year; and with regard to their enemies, the rats, it must be confessed that the latter were certainly abundant, and farther, that not only they lived upon the rabbits, but in herds, a sort of *imperium in imperio*, inhabited their burrows. Of live stock there are sheep and black cattle, together with seven horses; and whatever in future days may be the amount of human population, the present census is easily taken, amounting now altogether to eight families, of which are to be included those people belonging to the two lighthouses. The latter edifices are of brick, situated at the south-eastern extremity of the island, with good cottages, and fields for cultivation, for the use of the men employed there on duty.

Not far from the lighthouses, on the verge of the cliffs, in a situation particularly exposed to the weather, in fact, perfectly unsheltered on any side, are the ruins of a curious old building, called Boswell's House, the scantling of whose walls bears the strength of a castle, while the figure, though consisting of many apartments, is that of an ordinary farm-house. As the spot is one in former days not likely to have been sought from motives of pleasure, it is the more probable the domicile was turned to purposes of profit, and at any rate feasible, that the owner or inhabitant, be when it may the period he flourished, was an arrant smuggler.

On returning to the boat, fifty minutes were ex-

pended in pulling across to the village of Port Iron, including a short period disposed of by the boatmen for the purpose of securing the carcase of a ewe, that, having her legs tied together to prevent her from wandering, had fallen from the summit of the cliffs, and lay dead on the beach.

CHAPTER V.

A Ride to Ramsey—Laxey—Lead Mines—Maughold Head—Cliffs—Their extraordinary Character—The Village—The Well—Tradition—Town of Ramsey—Bay—Singular Jetty—A Manx Wedding Party—The Earl Grey Stage Coach—A talkative Lady—Benevolence ill rewarded.

THERE are three roads from Douglas to Ramsey ; the more direct, along the line of the coast, and the more circuitous route, by the way of St. John's, Kirk-michael, and Sulby. The first is not usually preferred for wheel carriages, for though in distance only sixteen miles, it is extremely hilly ; the other is twenty-five miles, but hard and level the whole way. The third track can be accomplished by foot passengers and horsemen only, being moreover difficult to find, and leading directly across the mountains, between Sulby and Kirkbraddan.

On the first of the above three roads, seven miles from Douglas, is the village of Laxey, a cluster of clean looking cottages at the bottom of a steep winding descent, in the gorge of a magnificent ravine, close to the sea-shore, on a small sandy bay. The road here, after winding considerably inland, turns suddenly towards the sea, whence the view of the village is extremely picturesque and beautiful ; a rivulet, for it cannot be called a river, though occasionally in some places a score yards in breadth, by whose tributary streams the machinery of the lead-mines, a

mile distant, is worked, here empties itself into the sea. The proprietors of the mines are solely dependent on these trickling donations, neither is the supply rendered greater or more equable by reservoirs or other artificial means ; the soil however being rocky, there is little absorption, so that the streams, small as they are, are tolerably regular all the year round.

The machinery, applicable only to water power, is of extremely simple construction, such as the village wheelwright and blacksmith might furnish and keep in repair ; consisting of one water-wheel of thirty feet diameter, for the purpose of pumping the main shaft ; a second of smaller dimensions, and a third of seventeen feet diameter, both the latter similarly employed in two other shafts, and lastly, a rough machine for crushing the ore. A man and boy are employed to attend this machine, the former to shovel the stones containing the ore, previously broken to the size ordinarily used in a macadamized road, into the hopper. The hopper is of simple contrivance, similar to that of a flour-mill, except that the horizontal motion of the inclined plane below its throat, is given by the boy, who pulls a string fastened to the lower extremity of the plane. The broken stones, sliding downwards, pass between two large fluted iron cylinders, the one stationary, and the other, being the axle of the water-wheel, continually revolving, whereby they are cracked as easily as if they were coffee-berries, into pieces the size of lumps of sugar. No apparent effort of the machine during this process is perceptible, unless, indeed, when now and then perchance a fragment harder or larger than usual comes in contact with the cylinders ; which impediment, though it cause a momentary check to

the rotatory motion, is soon overcome, for the cylinders, separating for an instant with a jarring sound, close again with redoubled vengeance upon the recreant stone, and violently dissever its particles.

So soon as the ore is broken in the manner above described, it is again passed through a similar machine, and cracked into still smaller pieces; after which latter process, it becomes of a size sufficiently small for the operation of jigging.

To this end, a large wooden box filled with the broken ore, and immersed in water, is affixed by a chain to one end of a long and strong pole. The bottom of the box is full of holes, and the pole is so unequally divided on its balance upon an upright post, that a small boy is enabled, by grasping the opposite end, and continually jumping with his arms above his head, to give the box a jigging motion sufficiently violent to cause the heavier pieces containing the ore, which here by the way is exceedingly rich, to make its way to the bottom of the mass. The aforesaid box holds two or three bushels of crushed ore, whereof by the above operation, by the help of the water, the weight of the lead finally preponderates, and rests in a distinct layer below the stone.

From the banks of the stream, where, by the way, indications of rural industry are agreeably manifested, by the exposure of pieces of home-made linen, newly manufactured, on a bleaching ground, the Douglas road again ascends for the distance of a mile and upwards, till it attains, I think, its greatest elevation, all the way to Ramsey. Here the road again winds inland, and the mountainous aspect of the country around becomes more and more perfect, as piles of

rounded green hills, the extreme summit of which is usually enveloped in cloud, though in height less than eighteen hundred feet, rise one above another towards the westward. On the east, wherever a view of the sea is obtained, one is reminded by the bluff rugged line of cliffs of the north coast of Ireland. From an eminence, whence a gradual descent leads all the way a mile and a half to Ramsey, the features of the prospect comprising the expansive bay, the lofty cliffs of Maughold head, and an extensive spread of flat land upon an angular promontory below, bedecked with neatly fenced and highly cultivated fields, are of more than ordinary beauty.

Maughold cliffs, independent of their altitude and size, which alone render them a distinguished feature in the island, are otherwise worthy of inspection, bearing, in one particular especially, an extraordinary character,—for the ground on their verge, instead of being, as is usually the case, perfectly level, rises so as to form an inclined plane, ascending towards the sea; and thus appears as the dissevered base, scanty remnant, and solitary memorial of a former chain of mountains, that perhaps in some dreadful convulsion of nature were riven from their foundations and precipitated into the sea. Whatever the cause, the same peculiarity, if I be not mistaken, is to be remarked in the cliffs adjoining the Giant's Causeway in Ireland.

In an elevated situation, nearly at the extreme summit of Maughold cliffs, the village of Kirk Maughold, owing to the prevalence of a superstitious feeling in the island, may be said to be a spot of especial resort, as well as of the living, of the dead; and St. Maughold's well, the effect of whose waters is

supposed to be of a nature rather spiritual than temporal, is a general point of attraction that people visit in summer. The extent of the church-yard, and the number of its tenants, indicate reliance in the Saint's good offices, even after death, and considering that the village, three miles from Ramsey, whence a rude track leads from the low land at the bottom, is on the top of a hill, and that the appearances of a living population consist only in a few straggling houses, I was at a loss to conceive, on viewing this church-yard, how and why so many quiet heavy corpses had been carried to such an inconvenient spot, till I heard the traditional legend relating to the spring. My informant, a peasant, who undertook to lead me to the well, told me that the water cured all disorders, provided it were drank on the first Sunday in harvest, on which day, he said, a multitude of people from all parts collect every year for the purpose. On a Danish cross which stands outside the church-yard, were to be read, he added, all the particulars of its history, and first and foremost, how St. Maughold himself, in days of yore, galloped across the sea on horseback, and at the bottom of the cliff, setting spurs to his horse, caused him in a single bound to leap clean to the top. Here being seized with thirst, the horse, as he knelt to drink at the well, left an indented mark of his knee on the stone, which impression remains visible, he farther asserted, at the present day. The said Danish cross, a fine relique of antiquity, is covered with characters, which, though to the unlearned unintelligible, are perfectly distinct and legible, whatever may be their import. The well rises nearly on the verge of the highest

cliff, and is defended by a porch formed of three large, unhewn blocks of slate-stone. Within, the water distils from above, drop by drop, through a thick bed of bright green moss, into the aforesaid stone basin ; whereupon I can testify that there actually exists an indentation such as my companion described, sufficient at any rate to prove, that sturdy superstition can reconcile all manner of improbabilities, even to finding a substitute in the knee of a living horse for an iron tool.

The town of Ramsey is situated on the north-eastern base of the chain of mountains that stretch diagonally from the north-east to the south-west, nearly across the island ; and frequently on a summer's evening glow with a warmth of colouring worthy of the pencil of Claude, as the wreathing smoke, gilded by the rays of a setting sun, and reflecting the purple heather, ascends from the peaceful cluster of clean white houses that nestle in their bosom and compose the town below. In the foreground the splendid bay forms a graceful curve, the chord of whose arc from Maughold Head to Craystyl Point, is at least six miles, and here an extensive spread of pure white sand, and numerous fishing boats continually in motion, embellish and enliven the harbour.

The Liverpool and Glasgow steamers use the port of Ramsey, as a place of call for passengers on their voyage up and down, in preference to all other parts of the island ; nevertheless, such visits are exclusively restricted to fine weather, nor is there at any time, except by means of a boat, communication between large vessels and the shore. As regards craft of two hundred tons or thereabouts, some of which are built

in the town, at times only of the extreme height of the tide, access can be had to the dock.

One place of accommodation for the use of small boats, is singular, and of curious construction. It is a sort of quay or jetty, formed altogether of slate-stone, whereof the slabs, instead of as usual being laid horizontal, are placed perpendicular, which mode has been adopted by reason of the soft unsound quality of the ground whereon the structure is built. Thus the long vertical slabs, as the whole mass sinks towards the middle, closely jam together, till the inverted arch thus formed is supported as it were by abutments on each extremity. As this homely work is not intended for the purposes of promenade, the manner of constructing its surface is equally simple, yet the ends of the slabs, merely levelled rudely by the hammer, afford a foothold infinitely more secure and less slippery than any description of pavement whatever. The Sulby river, the largest in the island, rises seven miles distant in the mountains, and, ankle deep at low water, and twenty or thirty yards in breadth, here empties itself into the sea.

The interior of the town is clean, but the streets are for the most part narrow, some indeed more so than those of Douglas, and in many of the principal thoroughfares, a man by the help of an ordinary walking stick, may touch both together the opposite houses.

The inn, when I arrived, though a comfortable house, was somewhat in a state of bustle and disorder. A wedding had been celebrated the very same morning, which event had disturbed the equanimity of the inmates ; and of the females especially, the services were absolutely unattainable, by reason of their ex-

cited sympathies. The youthful bridegroom, attended only by two young ladies, the bride and her bridesmaid, had crossed over from England a few days before, by the Liverpool steam-boat, and here they remained sojourners in the house during the intervening period of delay. As the young ladies mutually chaperoned each other, the young gentleman was necessarily unremitting in his attentions towards both, wherefore the second young lady's predicament, with regard to strict propriety, was extremely awkward ; one which required in fact no slight degree of matronly experience ; for hers was the care in behalf of her friend to guide the footsteps of youth amid the intricate mazes of friendship, where the path meanders dangerously among the precipices of love. The parties, as I was informed, were married by special license, which document in the Isle of Man costs five pounds, and now, the ceremony having been performed, they were taking refreshment, previous to their departure, in the apartment which afterwards was to be allotted to me.

While their equipage, a kind of two-horse vehicle, was preparing, I had frequent opportunities, being pro tempore in an outer room, as persons passed backwards and forwards, of observing the young people within, and upon these occasions, remarked that the young ladies were always simpering and silent, while the gentleman sustained the brunt of the conversation. The two former had apparently some time since finished eating, while the latter was completing his repast alone. To this end, a silk handkerchief to serve as a napkin was spread on his knees, and with fingers laden with a profusion of broad gold rings, he was mercilessly sucking the

bones of a roast duck, and dragging them between his teeth. Notwithstanding an operation so derogatory to effect, he was still comfortably satisfied with his own grace and eloquence, as extending a pair of extremely long arms towards the ladies, who kindly condescended to titter at every word he uttered, he invariably returned suitable tokens of obeisance, every action being accompanied with redundancy of motion, and straight lines being made curves on each trifling occasion, were it only to reach across the table for a spoonful of salt. Both arms he frequently crossed upon his bosom, and then spreading them abroad with Romeo-like gesticulation and force sufficient to stem the waves of the Hellespont, he would spout appropriate scraps of poetry, and afterwards gloat amorously upon the bride. In personal appearance he was not prepossessing, for he had remarkably thick blubber lips, a mouth of enormous calibre, full, prominent, light grey eyes, the right one veering full two points from its neighbour, eyebrows and eyelashes nearly white, and hair of the lightest flaxen. And as if to give his countenance, when he talked, the expression that nature had denied, he had a facetious manner of causing the twisted eye to vibrate and roll on its swivel. At last he led his fair companions down stairs to the carriage, in front of which were collected some half dozen acquaintance, formed by reason of his easy sociable manners even during this short matrimonial visit to Ramsey; and while, as the open vehicle departed, he replied with significant nods and winks to the congratulations of his male friends, the ladies, radiant in blushes and bloom, smiled graciously to all, kissed their

hands to the maid servants of the inn, and bowed to the landlady.

On my return to Douglas, I secured a place thither in a public carriage, not fairly to be called a stage-coach, but a sort of nondescript vehicle or caravan, somewhat like a baker's cart in form, with a door behind, and the name "The Earl Grey" painted conspicuously in large red letters on a yellow body. Such as it is, it works regularly between Ramsey and Douglas, and up one day, down the next, performs the journey throughout the whole year.

A few minutes before the hour of departure, when I repaired to the coach office, the preparations for starting appeared at first sight most unusually tardy; for so far from finding the horsekeepers and the cattle ready at their posts, the carriage stood empty in the street with a hind wheel out of order, and such was the apathy among the neighbours upon making enquiry, that I might very reasonably have come to the conclusion, that the equipage belonged to nobody. The coach-office was closed, and no one was present to answer interrogatories, except a blacksmith, who had doffed his coat, laid his box of tools on the ground, and was lustily hammering upon the crazy wheel. A pair of long-tailed cart horses, stood quietly devouring their provender out of a basket; and these saturnine animals, having finished their repast, first resting one hind leg and then the other, drooped their noses drowsily to the ground, with eyes closed, and motionless, otherwise than switching their tails now and then at the bite of a fly, or twisting an ear backwards half way round at the clink of the hammer.

In every day life I am inclined to believe more poetry exists than people imagine, for whether

gnomes, sylphs, or fairies, ideal existences, or means purely mortal be employed to pull the strings of the puppets, companions of our progress, it matters not one farthing, so long as we are doomed to remain under invisible agency. In the present instance, though no coachman was to be found, yet as the blacksmith hammered on at the wheel, and the passengers one after another began to arrive, it seemed at all events probable that not only at any rate matters were progressing somehow, but that also certain controlling authorities existed somewhere, and in fact no sooner had the blacksmith put the defective wheel in order, than accordingly the said coachman forthwith made his appearance. Without excuse or apology to the passengers whom he had so long kept waiting, on the contrary, he appeared in a portentous hurry, and behaved towards the latter precisely as if they themselves had been the cause of the delay.

Mr. Christian, the driver, though plain spoken, was a civil man, remarkably decently dressed, like an English small farmer, in an easy fitting, blue cloth coat, a broad brimmed hat, and neat buttoned gaiters. The passengers, who by this time were all ready, and anxious to be let in, consisted of a young lady about to return from a visit at Ramsey to her friends at Castleton; a young Yorkshireman, away from home on a tour of pleasure; a rheumatic elderly man, whose legs appeared to disadvantage in ribbed worsted stockings, and his wife, an extraordinary fat woman, whom Mr. Christian buttressed forwards, applying his shoulder to her rear, while her husband vainly remonstrated from within, that his shanks were not yet arranged in decent order. All these persons were finally seated in the vehicle, and I was on the point of making a fifth, and

taking post accordingly, when a lively, buxom lady, with black roving eyes, apparently about thirty, and somewhat nervous and fidgety withal, in a multitude of terrors, moreover, lest the vehicle might have already departed, made her appearance as another candidate, and to her I immediately gave place. I then stepped in lastly, making in all six persons closely dovetailed together, when Mr. Christian immediately slammed the door in its place, and mounting the box, whereon sat also two other persons, whipped his cattle to the extent of a slow, reeling trot, and bid adieu to the town of Ramsey. A few minor arrangements with regard to position, were indispensably necessary with the last-mentioned lady, to whom I sat opposite, all which were disposed of without demur or hesitation; yet still was she in a flutter, and evidently embarrassed by reason of small packages to be arranged in their places, and particularly one or other, which it seemed was left behind. After fretting some time and feeling about her person, rising sometimes from her seat, and making sundry ejaculations, "dear me," she exclaimed, "my parasol, my parasol; I'd rather pay thirty shillings than lose my beautiful parasol;" and then, with extraordinary volubility of tongue, she related in minute detail, all the particulars of the parasol's history; and from that subject she proceeded, talking incessantly to every body inclined to listen, continually changing her topic, and returning again to the lost parasol. Full twenty times before we had gone the first three miles, did she specifically declare that thirty shillings was the least possible value of the favourite parasol. She said "she was happy to quit the town of Ramsey, and surely must die if obliged to remain in it; 'twas enough

to be once born there, and now again, a single week, the first visit after ten years' interval, had sickened her of the place more than ever ; the 'Isle of Man' she continued, it certainly was, and a man sure enough was he who effected her deliverance, but for her part, she thought that the 'exile of woman,' was a far better, and a more appropriate appellation."

This effusion of language had never at all failed her, when, as we had completed about three miles on our way, an active, lightly-formed peasant girl, apparently about fifteen years old, bounding after us as gaily as a fawn, came evidently in direct pursuit of our vehicle. The little nymph was dressed in a dark blue camlet petticoat, with a plain white linen jacket, the latter loosely confined by a string at the waist : and thus equipped, had tripped along now full three miles from Ramsey, and to the joy of the lady, as she approached the door of the "Earl Grey," produced to her delighted eyes an implement till then concealed, namely, the highly valued, much lamented parasol. The benevolence of the action, and the grace wherewith it was performed, added charms to a countenance naturally lovely, resplendent in rural health, and replete with innocence that vainly repressed an arch expression in her eyes of the desire to create a surprise. As she turned on her heel, enlivened by reward, and carrying away all that the grateful lady gave, I thought I never saw a human smile more truly pourtray a virtuous consciousness. Acquitted of her errand, she skipped back on her way, her airy step and jocund gait braced by pure joy and light heartedness ; lighter still, nevertheless, was the lady's bounty, who, in despite of her annunciations regarding her parasol, and in recompence of

the zeal and activity of her humble benefactress, gave her,—reader, what think you that she gave?—nothing at all but thanks. *

On arriving at Laxey, the delay of an hour was necessary while the horses were baiting, which period was expended by the passengers either in walking about the village or in remaining at the inn. Although I preferred the former course, I nevertheless walked in for a moment to take cognizance of the apartment destined to our accommodation; whereof the floor was covered with plaster or cement, and the style of things altogether that of an English village ale-house. The fat elderly woman and her husband had already commenced refreshment; two Manx fishermen, seated at a table in the room, were in a state of prosing inebriation; and the talkative lady, after searching busily in her reticule, had at last extracted a bottle containing, I suppose, some mild carminative.

Our pace during the journey was about four miles an hour, and to the period so expended, is also to be added our delay at Laxey. While ascending the acclivities Mr. Christian besought us to get out and walk, to which request we acceded, including the postman employed to carry the mail between Ramsey and Douglas, who had some time since joined us, and standing on the step behind, clung on by his elbow placed within the door, after the manner of the *cad* of an omnibus.

CHAPTER VI.

ISLE OF MAN.

A Ride from Ramsey to the Point of Ayre—The Horse Paddy—The Garden of the Island—Fine Crops—Extreme Fertility of Soil—Luxuriant Furze—Bruising Mills—Kirkbride—The Point of Ayre—Jurby Point—The Village—The Church and Church-yard—A Man of Leisure—The Minister's Grave—The Bishop's Residence—The Curragh—Turf—Fossil Remains—Kirkmichael—Glenwillan—Beautiful Glen—Rivulet—Iron Spring—Ride across the Mountains to Douglas, by Kirkbraddan—An ill-placed Residence.

THE better to proceed at ease and at my leisure to the Point of Ayre, I selected what is called a respectable animal, from among the few horses to be had on hire in the town of Ramsey; and as the creature was good looking, although undoubtedly very old, I considered it useless to trouble the owner with questions as to his other qualifications. I simply enquired of the hostler, then leaning with his whole weight on the opposite side, my left foot being already in the stirrup, whether the horse were not given to bite. The man replied, unhesitatingly, “No;” but the horse, a game, ticklish, decayed hunter, commonly known in the town by the name of “Paddy,” by a certain sly, sleepy, intelligible expression of his eye, evidently contradicted the hostler's assertion. The hint being sufficient to put me on my guard, I accordingly took a firmer hold of the rein as I threw my leg over his back, then immediately set spurs to his sides, and departed in a canter. I observed a

smile on the people's faces as I rode along, and the boys especially exclaimed to one another, "There goes Paddy," as the steed, occasionally shaking his head, switching his tail till the air whistled, and elevating his rump every stride, more inclined a great deal to kick than to gallop, proceeded in a curiously tilting pace, that participated of the nature of both movements. However, a smart stroke of a whip on the withers is the proper remedy on such occasions, and never fails, as regards a kicking horse's posteriors, to effect the thing to be done—namely, to increase horizontal, at the expense of vertical motion.

I had a remarkably agreeable ride, notwithstanding the inauspicious commencement, over a road soft and sandy, and particularly suited to the hoofs of my long-reached, free-going animal, through a country laden with such heavy crops, as really might tempt a farmer to make choice of this part of the Isle of Man for an agricultural establishment. In fact the aforesaid chain of mountains divides the country into two parts, exhibiting a very remarkable difference as regards the soil; the whole of the southern portion, with the exception of the alluvial tract in the vicinity of Castleton before mentioned, being so poor as to be incapable of repaying, more than to a moderate extent, the labours of the farmer, and the northern portion, on the contrary, consisting of red fertile mould, a mixture of marl and sand. This northern portion has consequently not undeservedly obtained the appellation of "the garden of the island;" and here the farmers use little amendment other than the pure marl that abounds beneath the surface. The extraordinary improvement in the aspect of the crops,

compared with those in all other parts that I had visited, consisting at present—the season being autumn—of luxuriant clover and rye grass, and beds of potatoes, was such as to cause the most pleasing impressions. The spontaneous abundance of yellow trefoil and white clover growing upon the earthen embankments wherewith the fields are divided, is particularly striking; and I also remarked the unusual stature of the furze plants in the hedge that crowns the summit, the spring shoots being, every where in the Isle of Man, more like those of a young fir tree than of an ordinary plant. A dwarf species, called Manx furze, grows on the hills in a compact matted mass, that spreads like thick moss over several acres of ground in a plot, and is so springy, that a man may walk without much difficulty across the surface. Although at every step he may sink in up to his knees, the plant pressed by the foot to the earth, by its elastic reaction, rises again immediately unbroken. Both sorts are used in the winter as provender for cattle, the thorns being previously crushed by a machine adapted for the purpose, which implements, of simple construction, are merely a pair of wooden mallets, worked by a small water-wheel. Of these there are many among the streamlets in the mountains.

The cliffs on this part of the coast are of very considerable elevation. Hence the eye commands an extensive prospect of apparently low, level country, whereof in point of fact the land lies sufficiently high for the purposes of drainage; the whole, moreover, embellished with a profusion of good-sized timber trees.

The little sequestered village of Kirkbride, about a

couple of miles distant from the Point of Ayre, stands contiguous to a chain of tiny mountains, whose undulating surfaces, about their bases and amid the hollows, afford for the lowly cabin of the peasant, wherewith the landscape is here and there chequered, unusually picturesque situations. These cottages or cabins resemble in form, though better appointed, those of the poorer classes in Ireland, or the Highlands of Scotland. The village occupies an eminence well clad with trees; among these are thriving apple orchards, ash, and sycamore, besides elder of unusual dimensions. One little dwelling, even in this lonely spot, as is the case in almost every village in the island, is set apart as a day school for children.

From the village, a circuitous track leads by a regular descent, through a patch of small, strongly fenced enclosures, to the narrow spit of land, whereon is erected the lighthouse at the Point of Ayre; than which territory a more desert-looking spot cannot readily be brought to the imagination. The whole of this region is a barren waste of land, which day by day, and year after year, receives incessant accumulation from the ocean, whereby the surface is marked by those bold irregularities,—those undulations, fissures, and chasms,—that create an appearance as if it were the bed of the sea deserted by a deluge. On this spot I saw abundance of plover; and as I walked my horse along at a foot pace, I observed many of the newly hatched young, around which the old birds anxiously hovered, continually resorting to a well-known artifice; and in the hope of alluring an enemy to a false pursuit, limping tenderly away with a flagging wing, as if they were lame.

A line of shingle, whose boulders are above the ordinary size, and thrown up by the sea to a very extraordinary altitude, together with here and there a range of low broken cliffs, increasing gradually in height, forms the line of coast from hence to Jurby Point. Inland, a scanty bush of heather or of furze may be observed, at rare intervals, to rear its stunted growth from a bed of sand mixed with shingle.

From Jurby Point, a stormy headland,—a range of lofty cliffs extends in a continuous unbroken line, as far as the eye can reach to the southward, where, in the extreme distance, the faint shadowy outline of Peel Castle may be traced in clear weather. The cliffs, composed of red marl and sand, are exposed to the continual assaults of the sea, which here making inroads on a soft crumbling material, is demolishing, with considerable rapidity, their foundation. The soil meanwhile is so exceedingly fertile, that rich tufted white clover grows wild to their very verge, and so thickly matted and springy, that, like the dwarf furze before mentioned, the elastic carpet rises again immediately under the foot buried beneath it, without leaving the slightest mark or vestige of its pressure.

Not far removed from the Point, in an exposed and bleak situation, are planted the small village and church of Jurby, whither, as the sea approximates more and more every day, it is probable that the whole, ere the lapse of many years, will be swallowed by its billows.

Having arrived at the village, I made fast the horse Paddy to a stout rail fence, intending to proceed on foot to the aforesaid Point, and the church-yard. While engaged in the former occupation, being accosted by an inhabitant, who politely offered to bear me company, I acceded to his offer, and we

walked along together, while the kindly countenance of my companion, and his perpetual flow of good spirits, enlivened the short time I passed in his society. He possessed, he said, a limited independence; and it was easy to perceive, by his easy gesture and action, that he was a man of leisure, for not only did he appear glad to render service to a stranger, but happy to find for himself a little to do. Ruddy in his face and round in his person, of breadth nearly equal to length, his activity withal was rather remarkable; for by a harlequin leap, between a jump and a roll, he cleared the ditch and bank fences on the way, contriving every time, one could scarcely tell how, invariably to alight on his legs. He repeated this feat half a score times and more, as on our way to the Point we crossed several small fields divided by the aforesaid double ditch and bank, the latter so wide that a cart might be driven thereon without difficulty.

We walked to the church-yard, where inscriptions proclaim the welcome of many a drowned mariner to his last home; and here, among strangers and his own parishioners, a late clergyman of the village takes everlasting repose. He was long before his death, my companion informed me, a suffering, infirm man, but being stout at heart, and devoted to his calling, the more helpless the more militant he grew against increasing age and infirmities. In sickness and in sorrow he was always at his post, even to leave his bed to go to the pulpit; and when no longer able to walk, so long as he could read the liturgy, rather than be absent on the Sunday, was wheeled to church in a common barrow. Like a hero in battle, the poor minister of Jurby, to the

last hour of his life, did his Christian duty: like a hero while living, when assailed by mortal troubles, he vigorously repelled their assault; and like a hero now dead, he lies buried on a spot where the four winds of heaven dash fiercely upon his unsheltered sepulchre.

My new acquaintance, after we had passed through the church-yard to Jurby Point, accompanied me to the spot where I had left my horse tied to the rail. Anxious for occupation of any sort, he now proceeded with great nimbleness to tighten the girth, in despite of a caution I thought proper to offer, and the steady, oblique glance to boot with which Paddy, as if fixing his fancy on a particular spot for a mouthful, intently regarded his fat ribs: luckily, however, his rashness was attended with no disaster.

I now bent my way towards the village of Kirk-michael, through a country of extraordinary fertility, along a flat, even road, whereon the horse Paddy, in whose groggy hoofs the blood was now in full circulation, cantered along most gaily. Within a mile of the village is the residence of the bishop, a fact which amounts to a proof, probably, that the spot of all others is not the worst in the island. The edifice is plain and unpretending, situated at the termination of an avenue of sycamore trees, adjoining the main road from Ramsey.

The diversity of scenery within the small periphery of the Isle of Man, is really extraordinary, whether one proceeds along the line of coast, or travels inland. The attention of the traveller is by turns allured to the bluff rock—the shingled or the sandy beach—the black, angry, wave-beaten shoal—or the wide-spreading, hospitable bay. Already I

had traversed mountain and moor, together with extensive tracts of rich arable and pasture, and lastly I encountered some thousands of acres of deep and spongy morass, as pure bog land as is to be met with in any part of the kingdom. A great part of the country, inland, between Kirkmichael and Jurby, consists of a bed of pure black peat, distinguished provincially by the appellation of "The Curragh," the whole surface of which is laid down to pasture, and drained by clean even-cut ditches, with a bank in the middle, surmounted by a thriving alder hedgerow. These ditches discharge themselves into a main watercourse about twelve feet wide, whence the drainage is so perfect, that there is not, as I have elsewhere observed relating to the whole island, even here, either lake, pond, or deposit. In those places where turf is dug for the purpose of fuel, it is cut in layers of a yard and a half, or thereabouts, deep, and being black and soft, is moulded into form previous to being carted, by the hand; and here, only a few years after a thick stratum of the surface has been thus removed, the soil again becomes covered by a thick coat of herbage. Abundance of bog wood is furnished from this morass, and fossil remains of animals have also frequently been discovered. I saw in the possession of a medical gentleman in Douglas, a fine specimen of horns, stupendous in size, of an animal of the deer species, and of which I believe another pair, the counterpart of these, is preserved in Edinburgh Museum, the gift of the late Duke of Athol to the establishment.

The road from Ramsey, after proceeding a considerable distance inland, again approaches the sea at Kirkmichael, which little town and its neighbour-

hood, including the rural village of Glenwillan, both fronting the sea, and seated at the base of an amphitheatre of mountains, are among the most beautiful spots in the island; especially the neat fishing hamlet just alluded to—for so it is at present, consisting merely of a few fishermen's houses in the bosom of the glen—is entitled to that distinction. Hence a small rivulet, descending from the mountains in the rear, trickles along a broad level plain below, so protected by the aforesaid mountains on the one part, and the precipitous banks of the ravine, that here diverge rapidly towards the sea, on the other, that the extensive space between of pasture land, as level as a bowling-green, may well and deservedly be called the valley of shelter and sunshine. I have no doubt, since a few ornamental cottages have already been built, and a small spring hereabouts is strongly impregnated with iron, that, in the natural course of things, ere the lapse of many years, this situation will be chosen as the site of a watering-place, and a point of summer resort.

The banks of the glen are composed of the same rich mixture of red marl and sand before mentioned at Jurby, and are covered also with equally luxuriant vegetation. In form, they are unusual and extraordinary, for the cause of which I will not pretend to account: however, the ground above consists of a parcel of small undulating hillocks, whose tops towards the verge of the glen are, as it were, shaven off, so as to form so many flat tabular surfaces, that precisely resemble the remains of an ancient fortification. A pleasing opportunity is here afforded, from many a sunny nook among the sloping sides of the ravine, with reference to the course of the rivulet that

meanders below, of reflecting, that, notwithstanding its diminutive size, it has probably, aided by the hand of time, been a mighty agent in the formation of the surrounding scenery. Descending through succeeding ages along its narrow bed, year after year, over a surface of tender, crumbling mould, wearing its way, by degrees, through stratum after stratum, and forming for itself continually a lower and a lower level, the earth meanwhile has risen at the sides in fantastic fragments, of magnitude continually increasing. The parent stream renders these still larger and larger, by gradually undermining their bases; and, finally, remains itself a mere streak in the landscape, compared with the above mentioned grander features of its own creation.

From Kirkmichael I rode to Douglas by a mountain track, or bridle-path, that leads hence in a line nearly direct across the summit of the hills, and strikes upon the Peel Town road at Kirkbraddan. Another route to Douglas across these mountains extends from Sulby four miles from Ramsey; also by the way of Kirkbraddan. I had a pleasant ride over green hills, where the spread of sheep walks is so extensive, as to promise, under a proper grazing system, a good return for the farmer. The few sheep that at present occupy these heights, though hardy in their nature, cannot be expected, thus living from generation to generation without a sufficiency of winter keep, to thrive, and are consequently a lean, half-starved race. Packs of the red-billed chough scream in concert on the dreary waste, thereby inflicting a greater appearance of desolation than ought, under favourable circumstances, to attach to the spot.

I saw no good stock of any description while in the Isle of Man; neither is it probable, I think, that the case will be otherwise while the land continues to be tilled by the present mixed breed of agriculturists—half farmer, half fisherman; he who, possessing a source of profit in another direction, is thereby induced to devote a part only of his time, care, and capital thereupon. Formerly, a peculiar breed of Manx pony was in high estimation; but of late years, even these animals have dwindled away, and are not to be found. I ought to make an exception with regard to a particularly fine race of pig, almost, I think, indigenous; at least I have never seen in England any of this marked character. At different places here on the western coast I saw three or four, weighing each upwards of twenty score, and exquisite in form; possessing length and depth of carcase, smallness of bone, diminutive legs, and a broad shoulder, the back remarkably hollow, the belly touching the ground, the ears pointing forwards, and the small nose like that of a mole. In short, they have the form of the Chinese pig, with increased length and size, and a remarkably long-tufted stern.

I had considerable difficulty in finding my way by the aforesaid track, by reason of meeting neither traveller, inhabitant, nor directing post in the way: of the latter especially, there is, I suppose because wood is scarce, no such thing in any part of the island.

Half way, nearly on the extreme summit of the ridge, is a dreary, chilly dwelling, very deservedly deserted by its inhabitants, at present represented by an aged man and woman, whose presence is hardly sufficient to cheer and preserve from dew

the damp cold walls; nevertheless, the house is one of some pretension, surrounded by a belt of plantation. The trees, such has been the little care and heed on the part of the proprietor to aspect and situation, that, firs though they be, they actually refuse to grow. The aforesaid domain, evidently intended for a gentleman's residence, but obstinately placed, in defiance of the elements, in one of the most disadvantageous positions in the whole island, is called Ingebrack, from a village of a few houses of that name lying a little below on the southern side of the hill. It is a singular example of the mistakes that people are apt to commit, and frequently most unnecessarily into the bargain, in the choice of a suitable spot for building.

CHAPTER VII.

STAFFA, IONA, AND THE CALEDONIAN CANAL.

Steam Communication from Liverpool to Glasgow—Packet Agent at Ramsey—Departure—Boarding a Steamer at Night—Sickness—Mull of Galloway—Ailsa Craig—The Clyde—The Broomielaw—Inland Navigation—The Maid of Morven Steamer—The Vessel en Deshabille—Voyage to Greenock—The Kyles of Bute—Lochgoilhead—Creenin Canal—Korryvrekan—Island of Eisdale—Arrive at Oban.

THE people at Douglas know, or care to know very little of the proceedings of the Liverpool steamers, that, twice a-week, wind and weather permitting, call for passengers at the sister port of Ramsey, on their way to Glasgow. Having made up my mind to travel by this conveyance, such were the obstacles thrown in my way with regard to information, when I enquired particulars at Douglas, that I was well nigh dissuaded from undertaking the voyage altogether. However, since contingencies so frequently control our comfort, and combine to retard our progress through life, any thing, to my mind, is better than a retrograde movement; therefore, I was averse to the counsel of an individual long resident in the island, who anxiously laboured to persuade me to return whence I came, and re-embark at Liverpool. Finally, I resolved to go and wait the arrival of a vessel at Ramsey, under all the chances of meeting with disappointment.

As the hour of arrival of the vessel off the port is usually in the middle of the night, I departed accord-

ingly the preceding day, and took up my quarters under the auspices of the landlord of the inn, who, besides the functions of his hostelry at Ramsey, is entrusted by the steam packet proprietors at Liverpool with the agency of their establishment.

Upon enquiry, I immediately learnt that the packets, with an exception in case of rough weather, are regular and punctual in their visits; in fact, they arrive usually between the hours of midnight and two in the morning, lay to, fire a gun, hoist a light, and the passengers go on board from the shore in a boat. Five or six other passengers were already waiting in the house, all of whom had received intimation that little time would be allowed for preparation in the morning; however, they were told that a look-out would be had for the vessel, and at least sufficient notice given for departure. It was lucky I paid little heed to the latter comfortable assurance; on the contrary, I disposed of myself and luggage so as to be ready to start on an alarm at five minutes' warning; and, after having retired to my apartment at the top of a narrow flight of stairs, where all the doors in the same passage were immediately contiguous to one another, at an early hour all the inmates of the house were silent in repose.

According to appointment, at two o'clock in the morning sure enough, or thereabouts, up stairs hurried the landlord, vociferating all the way, as if the house were on fire, and flames bursting out of the windows. "Get up! get up! all of ye," he said; "you'll be too late—the packet's come—she has hove to—be down directly, or you'll lose your passage!" Then, thumping stoutly with his fist at every body's door, he presented a light to the proffered

candle-end of each, ran down stairs again at the risk of breaking his neck, and thence disappeared out of the house, on his way to the beach. Thin partitions now began perpetually to creak, and the barefooted, newly risen from their beds, stamped heavily on the floor: some yawned,—others grumbled; but almost every one ejaculated either a want or a wish. One had lost a shoe, another had got a wrong boot, and the tallow stump of a third was crackling in the socket. No one was in the way to render assistance, and the landlord's emphatic injunction rang in the ears of all. For my part, determined to take the best possible care of myself, I locked my door, snuffed my candle, set to work in right earnest, and in five minutes was ready on the landing-place. Thence I strode down stairs, out of doors, and away in the dark to the sea-shore, where, at the end of the jetty, a stiff rowing-boat, manned by three or four stout sailors, lay ready to receive us. In a few minutes the whole of the passengers had arrived; the rowers had taken their places; one by one the former stepped in, staggering and tumbling into their seats; the coxswain held on, tugging hard at the boat hook; and the phosphoric waves splashed heavily, like molten silver, over the boat's bows. Some people now sat upon wet boards, others on dry; the luggage was all on board; the coxswain pushed away from the jetty; the boat was trimmed; the oars set to work; and a dim lanthorn at the end of a boat-hook, a mere glow-worm in the dark, now marked the progress of our skiff through the waves towards the gallant steamer, whose resplendent blue light softly blazed in the distance like a little moon. On approaching the steamer, a hoarse grunting voice

from above immediately greeted our arrival; a rope flung on board was quickly caught and made fast; hauling lustily thereon, in despite of rolling and heaving and hissing, we swang round against the vessel's huge black side, mounted the ladder, while the men still held on, and the luggage was taken on board; and then the toppling boat being again adrift, the steam was set on, and the vessel made progress on her way.

Few locomotive operations are more disagreeable than thus boarding a large steamer at sea in the middle of the night, particularly since the traveller, constrained to passive performance in the drama of life, feels dismally conscious that he no more contributes to the energies that propel him on his way, than one of his own trunks or portmanteaus. He stands, as it were, an interloper on board among men and things, faces that he never saw before, and whose outline he is unable to distinguish, and even deprived of the privilege of participating on equal terms with the passengers below in comfortable or uncomfortable sleep. Besides, the animal spirits, in despite of the philosophy of the mind, are prone at all times to resent capricious usage, either overflowing by their accelerated torrent the tranquil and pleasing images that fancy before had created, or, like a spent rocket deprived of its projectile force, falling to a lower point than whence they rose. Happy is man at any time to renounce vain-glorious notions of self-importance; and even as a being of the earth is overwhelmed among the magnitudes of creation, so does the land-lubber find himself ten times more small when on board a steam-boat.

Hitherto I had not exchanged a word with the

captain or any other individual. The former was lonely pacing the deck enveloped in a thick cloak and cap, the lappets pulled down over his ears ; the man at the wheel was silent and still, and like myself all the rest had withdrawn to one solitary spot or other. There I sat reclining rather disconsolately upon one of the benches, till the revolving light of the point of Ayre faded away in the distance, the grey tint of the morning began to appear, and finally, the paddles of our steamer thumped the waves of the Mull of Galloway. Here the boisterous heavings of the ocean, counteracted by the stupendous engine's power, inflicted every plank and beam of the vessel with a vibratory motion, while inexorable old Neptune whispered dismal forebodings in the ear of every fresh-water sailor, doomed now to undergo the worst of mortal trials and suffering. Tickling the inwards with his trident, all intestine matters were forthwith turned directly topsy-turvy, as the little Tritons, claiming the usual tribute for the fishes, remorselessly played their gambols in people's stomachs, and seamped upwards, and then down again like a riotous regiment of cavalry. In sheer mercy to the victims, kind pity at last, seated on the god's green locks, accelerated the awful catastrophe ; thus hurling the assailants, disgorged *pas de charge*, helter skelter into their native element.

This troublesome portion of the voyage from Liverpool to Glasgow, where the struggle of conflicting currents torments the waves with perpetual agitation, being once passed, the remainder of the passage may be described as a smooth water excursion ; in fact the sea was as calm all the rest of the way as the Thames at Southend. In case

it were possible to compensate a traveller for the pain of sea-sickness by the splendour of a marine or inland landscape, it is here within the British dominions ; where the changing horizon displays every variety of mountain scenery, and magnificent features of land and water in the freedom of range and distance, create in the mind an impression of trans-atlantic magnitude. I was particularly reminded, especially about the entrance of the Clyde, of the regions of the great St. Lawrence. The towering Ailsa Craig, a vast pyramid rising from the ocean, long rested a point for the steersman whereon to shape his course ; then skirting its base, we left it far astern, and while the sun was yet high, entered the noble estuary.

Making rapid progress up the river, we rounded that angular point where, upon the banks of the Clyde, at this spot changing its direction with a bold and sudden sweep, stands the town of Greenock. Henceforward the diversity of the landscape presented to the view one uninterrupted, moving panorama, teeming with objects to amuse the senses, and make manifest the industry and opulence of the country. Hence, every half hour in the day, steamers regularly ply with passengers to Glasgow ; others of unusual breadth, and uncouth build, fashioned for the express purpose of towing, dragging after them with powerful grasp three and more reluctant merchantmen lashed to their stern, move onwards at the rate of seven or eight miles an hour through the water. And lastly, besides small vessels passing to and fro of every description, occasionally a steamer of first-rate magnitude divides the cloven river like a spouting whale in the sea. The artificial means, by

stone embankments and otherwise everywhere resorted to, to improve the channel of the river; and the steam scows with labouring buckets continually scooping mud from the bottom to deepen its bed, are among the many sights that display the vigilance and energy of commercial enterprize, whereby a river naturally shallow and prone to overflow the banks, is held subservient to the purposes of navigation, and retained by human science within a narrower boundary.

A person indeed must be fastidious, if not content with the excellent arrangements carried into effect on the quays and landing places for the disembarkation of passengers and luggage, at Glasgow. For my own part, my chief reason for coming to the city being in point of fact for the purpose of getting out of it, I had sufficient cause for congratulation in the effective services of a mild and intelligent steward, and porters remarkable for their fidelity. And inasmuch as, to be quietly lodged, civilly treated, and readily supplied with local information, are the main points required by a traveller, so here of all places in the world he has the means of being gratified in all these particulars. The very possibility is agreeable, being in any place whatever, to be able to leave it at will, were it only once in the twenty-four hours, at the signal of the mail-guard's horn, to take post by his side, and for better for worse, to flee far away, in case one so wills, or let it alone. Multitudinous here are the points of peregrination, not only by long established lines of beaten roads, but over parts of the country arduous formerly to explore, but now divested of their natural obstacles by the power of steam. The windows in the agents' houses in the

Broomielaw, and the walls into the bargain, are made patchwork by the numerous sliding boards in pannels, that serve to render information to the public of the departure of the various steamers from the port, and being easily moveable, are shifted accordingly at every successive change of the home navigation. In silence and at leisure, even without wasting a word in the way of enquiry, an individual may here determine a projected course, and gratify his feelings, without further labour and pains than stepping on board the chosen bark, by swimming as it were with the crowd along the current, and marking the progress of improvement, inch by inch, through the country.

Two lines of travel particularly present themselves to his notice. One direct to Oban, and thence by the Caledonian canal to Inverness; the other by the same route as far as Oban, and thence to the town of Tobermory, the Cave of Staffa, and the ruins at Iona in the western Hebrides. Both in their turn of the above routes I resolved to pursue accordingly, and to this end engaged a passage on board the Maid of Morven steamer, which vessel departs regularly on her way twice a week from Glasgow. Arrangements are made by the proprietors on these occasions, to afford to travellers an opportunity of changing their route at will from Oban; which place, the Maid of Morven, her sister steamer, moving in an opposite direction, and a third vessel that plies to the western Hebrides, make their point of rendezvous. The three captains contrive to meet as nearly as possible to noon at Oban, and thence also, after making their interchange of passengers, and completing other arrangements, depart at the same time to their different desti-

nations. Progress also may be made as far as Oban by way of Inverary, which route a stage-coach performs over a rough and mountainous road; however, I preferred going the whole way by the Maid of Morven.

In due time, that is to say on the morning of departure, I had reason to know by experience that I had formed a too flattering picture of the ensuing voyage, and certainly I did feel at the moment when I stepped on board the vessel at the quay, a sensation of chilling disappointment. Placards and panegyrics everywhere set forth in the most flattering colours the delights of the expedition, and above all I expected at least to meet with persons, whose notions sympathised with my own as regarded a mutual party of pleasure. The poetic appellation “Maid of Morven,” naturally created in the mind the semblance of a craft such as the lord mayor of London’s barge, or that of Cleopatra, an airy swan-like galley, stealing through the balmy air, amid the wild land of mountain and of song, and bearing on her gilded decks fair woman’s sylph-like form, her countenance melting to the harp’s thrilling cords, and yielding up an elevated soul to the soft witchery of music. But, alas! in the estimate of fancy and reality, it little matters, whether the one wings inordinately high its upward flight, or whether the other descends proportionally low; therefore I will, as regards the Maid of Morven, simply describe the state in which I found her.

At half-past eight o’clock in the morning, after making way with much difficulty across two or three other vessels that lay nearer the quay, I finally succeeded, by walking along a rough plank, in getting on board the steamer. The morning was more than

usually cold for the time of year, and a stiff gale blew steadily, directly ahead of our course, up the river. So far was unfortunate. When told I was on board the *Maid of Morven*, I could hardly give credit to the information, such was the scene of dirt and confusion, such the quantity of packages, and the mob of owners wrangling about stowage, that disturbed the thoroughfare. A few quarter-deck passengers meanwhile stood disconsolately regarding each other, as if lamenting the untoward fate that had brought them together, each unable for a moment to stand still, without being molested, or molesting others. A multitude of poor folks from the Highlands, busily arranging their own property, jabbered together in Erse so loudly and fluently, that the captain, unless shouting at the full extent of his lungs, was unable to make himself heard. The *Maid of Morven* was a very *Cinderella* in her working dress, as black as a Newcastle collier, and crammed full till she rolled with stores and packages of every description. There were sacks of oatmeal and barley, sugar-hogsheads, crates, deal cases, trunks and band-boxes, stoves, frying-pans, scythes, hoes, and sickles ; besides all sorts of agricultural implements and hardware. Among the fore-deck passengers were lads and lasses from the mountains, shepherds with long poles, and plaids folded across their shoulders ; and especially, as is usual among crowds under the most forbidding circumstances, plenty of mothers with young children.

When the hour of departure, protracted to an unusual period, at last arrived, the authority of the captain was seriously exerted to oblige the shore-people to conclude their leave-taking and quit the vessel. Several, as no other argument would suffice;

he finally pushed out by the head and shoulders. When we began to move, it was at once evident the vessel was grievously ill-trimmed and top-heavy; in fact she reeled and swung from side to side, as if really about to rest on her beam-ends; whereupon the captain filled his nostrils with snuff, disposed of the crew in the way of equilibrium, and placed heavy plugs of iron on the deck to serve as ballast. In spite of all these measures, always a heavy mover through the water, and furnished with an engine weak in proportion to her dimensions, she was considerably weighed down by the head, and sensibly quivered by the concussion of the waves. Meanwhile the more lively craft overtook us with the utmost facility, as we tardily weathered the head swell, and others meeting us with wind and tide in their favour, flew upwards before the gale with inconceivable rapidity; a confused semblance of forms and features in a row along the bulwarks, joint property, as it were, of a string of tall, upright, staring figures, ranged in order for inspection.

Four hours of toil and trouble were expended on the way to Greenock, and there, fast to the quay we remained another full hour, while the exchanging of passengers, the shifting the cargo, embarkation and altercation proceeded as strenuously as before. In one place knots of men stood wrangling together without an ostensible object; in another, bales and packages were handed from one to another without apparent presiding authority, and in every direction, coils of rope were flung across the deck with no heed to bystanders. We were hustled by porters, plagued by bare-legged children with baskets of "berries;" absolutely without the enjoyment of a single mo-

ment's security, or a dry spot whereon to stand or sit down ; and finally, a rampant steamer alongside belched black smoke and cinders on board in a continued cloud, whereat the Maid of Morven, hissing as if to cool her impatience, bespattered the passengers' clothes with her spare steam. Altogether, with the sounds of puffing, blowing, and panting of the engine, and the sights of ashes, fire, and smoke, ours for the present was the den of the salamander, or the Cyclops' cave.

Matters however, fortunately, had actually arrived at the worst, and as it frequently happens in the affairs of life, they afterwards began to mend. Clamour had subsided ; preparations were made for departure ; the hoarse voice of our noble captain croaked forth a pleasing mandate, and the tinkling bell forthwith confirmed the joyful tidings. Once more we were actually under weigh, and once again in the middle of the stream, the Maid of Morven pressed the waves with her swelling bosom. From the bottom of the Clyde old Neptune looked upwards and smiled. Literally, the aspect of the weather during our detention at Greenock had undergone a total change. The air became mild, the wind lulled, and the sun, lastly, from behind a dense curtain of cloud, enlivened us by his appearance. The late vigorous proceedings with regard to the cargo, had not a little improved our general accommodation ; families in groups collected on the fore-castle—people were provided with seats—children ceased to cry—women employed themselves with their infants ; the whole after-part of the vessel was now in decent order, and the captain, having time to

spare, willingly bestowed attention on all his passengers.

The remainder of the day was made cheerful by incessant changes of scenery, as, passing through a tortuous channel, each moment placed the various objects in a different position, thus embellishing the landscape with ever-varying tints and outline. Meanwhile we glaneed along in our course from point to point, peacefully as the shadows of clouds on the distant hills. The whole way from Rothsay, through the Kyles of Bute, a series of striking images appeared one after another. Sometimes we found ourselves among broken islands, scattered abroad as it were at random in the ocean, at others we steered among abrupt rocks; and again, in a more inland course, as if within the channel of a gallant river, whose mountain banks are tufted to the water's edge with bright alluvial verdure. And finally, we passed between the main land and the coast of Cantyre, skirting Loch Fyne, renowned for herrings. After all, the voyage, owing to the previous delay in the morning, was more protracted than on ordinary occasions, so that it was past ten o'clock at night before we arrived at the end of our first day's voyage, at the village of Lochgoilhead. Here again it was our lot to taste the vicissitudes of life and peregrination, the place at the head of the Greenin canal, where we were now about to pass the night, being ill calculated to afford even a single traveller decent accommodation. Having made our way through the first lock of the canal, we disembarked at the principal alehouse, where being so far fortunate as to obtain a bed, I was conducted to my

apartment. Here indeed I might have slept, had the desire of rest been a unanimous feeling with the inmates ; but such was the noise of talking and disputing among those who, having no beds of their own, cared not to disturb those who had, and so crazy and thin were the partitions, that no sooner had a mouse rattled a teacup in one room than he was heard in all. Owing to various disturbances of one sort or another, I had hardly closed my eyes when I was aroused, at four o'clock in the morning of the next day, by a continued blast of a tin horn. It was indispensable to start thus early, in order to overcome the delay of passing the other locks of the canal, so as to arrive at twelve o'clock, the time of rendezvous with the other boats at Oban. Besides those persons in the public-house, were several others out-lodgers in the village, wherefore the man, till all had assembled, never for a moment ceased to blow.

By reason of having to pass through fifteen locks and four draw-bridges, we now commenced a tedious, crawling voyage of nine miles through the canal, for which distance the channel from Loch Fyne to the Sound of Jura, has been cut a great part of the way, by excessive labour, through solid rock ; whereas the former circuitous route proceeded either south of Cantyre, or across the narrow neck of land bounded at the opposite sides by East and West Tarbet. After heavily toiling along for three hours in confined space, it was the more agreeable to be again refreshed by beholding the open sea, where, among the first objects wherewith we were now gratified, was the famous whirlpool or gulf of Coryvrekan, the said torrent bearing about half a mile distant on our larboard bow. Here the two frowning headlands of Scarba and Jura,

one on each side, seem as it were to take post opposite each other, and extend their bluff crags in menacing attitude over the fierce struggle of land and water. Notwithstanding a full confidence in the power of steam, it is not without a feeling of respect that one glides silently along within the precincts of an awful and unseen power, from whence, if once predominant, there is no retreat ; tradition, moreover, relates a numerous catalogue of men and vessels that have perished in the whirlpool. Clusters of islands, disposed in this part of the ocean in irregular masses, resemble the remains of a shattered continent, and receive a still wilder aspect from the variety of impetuous bubbling currents wherewith the intervening channels are infested ; however, the Maid of Morven soon left astern this western Charybdis, and now began to receive frequent increase of passengers by small boats from the shore. Some of these, inhabitants of the adjacent country, hence took passage to Oban ; others left us in exchange, on an inland excursion of business or pleasure. Young ladies in straw bonnets, some with green veils, others with white, now clambered daintily up our vessel's side ; and now many a damsel, rejoicing in agility and youth, repaid with ill-repressed laughter and blushes, the too zealous assistance of her swain below. A scene of cordial hand-shaking and affectionate leave-taking then ensued among members of the present happy generation, who in these remote regions, formerly living apart and in solitude, now enjoy facilities of social intercourse till of late years utterly unknown. How different the picture of a summer's day now on this spot, when beauty, transported by the giant power of steam, skims the waters in sunshine, and the

period in the olden time when poor Johnson, in an open skiff, heavily breasted the waves.

The little island of Eisdale, in population is like an emmet's nest; half a mile long and a quarter broad, containing three or four hundred inhabitants, all busily employed in quarrying and preparing for market slate-stone, of which it is a solid mass. The appearance of our steamer infused into the little colony a wonderful degree of alacrity. Men, women, and children poured forth in haste from their low-roofed cottages, and collecting together in a swarm, peopled the projecting crags like cockchafers on a bough. Many boat loads of slate lay piled in heaps on the shore, ready for embarkation.

Punctually arriving at the specified time of rendezvous at Oban, at a few minutes before noon, the *Maid of Morven* lay alongside the quay and town, the latter consisting of a row of exceedingly small, low, newly built houses, at the head of a circular bay. The *Highlander*, the small steamer on board which we were now about to proceed to Tobermory, had arrived at Oban an hour before; but the *Highland Chieftain*, the sister boat of the *Maid of Morven*, had not yet made her appearance on her way from Inverness. Delay at all events was at present our doom, amid an unfelicitous blending of business and pleasure. Many stores shipped here from Glasgow were now to be unladen, and bags, boxes, and barrels, bandied from our vessel to the shore. At last the passengers bound for Tobermory, Staffa, and Iona, stepped on board the *Highlander*, which vessel, the little bell having rung its welcome peal, gaily led the way out of the harbour.

The Highland Chieftain, having some time since arrived, departed to pass the night at our old quarters at Lochgoilhead; and the Maid of Morven to proceed to Fort Fitzwilliam, on the Caledonian canal.

CHAPTER VIII.

Go on board the Highland Steamer—Dunolly Castle—Bay of Tobermory—A kind Landlady—Expedition in the Highlander—Departure—Calliach Head—Treshnish Islands—First View of Staffa—The Buchaille—Inconvenient Landing at Iona—Pebbles—The Ruins—Their desecration—A civil Scotsman—Embarkation—Landing at Staffa—Fingall's Cave—Ascent on the Island—Delightful Prospect—A Herd of Seals—Anecdote of a tame Seal—Its resemblance to the Mermaid—Dr. Taylor's Museum of comparative Anatomy at Manchester—Anecdote of a Boa Constrictor at Derby—Re-embarkation—The Cotton Umbrella—A black Cook—Return to Tobermory.

THE change of vessels, it was immediately evident, was much to our advantage; for the Highlander, though a much smaller craft than the Maid of Morven, was less encumbered with a cargo of merchandize, and the few persons now on board were all engaged in a similar object—namely, to visit the Islands of Staffa and Iona. We had a delightful voyage the remainder of the evening, from the moment we left the Bay of Oban, skirting the projecting rock whereon Dunolly Castle, the domain of Macdougall of Loru, has rested above the waters for succeeding ages; and the building and the rock have become so blended together that both in appearance seem crumbled into one, till, making the bluff island of Mull, we steered our course up Tobermory Sound, and at half-past nine o'clock, after five hours' passage from Oban, cast anchor in the bay—a bay within a bay, sheltered by the surrounding hills from every wind that blows.

No refuge for small vessels can possibly be more perfect than the harbour of Tobermory, although on our arrival the light was insufficient to see it to advantage: the party, however, who succeeded us on the next voyage, had still more reason to complain, for they were detained so long at the rendezvous at Oban, that the hour was three in the morning when they arrived at Tobermory.

Close to the water's edge stands the principal public-house of the village, whence the buildings, planted on steep and precipitous positions, rise one above another to the summit of the elevated land that girds the bay. Above all, is the small neat church. On stepping on shore, we immediately wended our way up this acclivity, and were received midway at the house of the postmaster, where good will and cleanliness combine to impress the visitor with those favourable impressions, which, the longer the sojourn he happens to make, the more amply will he find realised. At the house of Mrs. Cuthbertson, Scotch broth and marmalade, together with all the delicacies of a Scots wife's cuisine, during the whole time we remained in the mansion, were afforded us in profuse liberality.

According to the general arrangements before adverted to, the hour of seven o'clock the next morning was appointed for our departure, on board the Highlander, for Staffa and Iona; and at seven o'clock, accordingly, or rather nearly an hour before, I heard the vessel's engine vehemently hissing under my window; a sound which vastly contributed to rouse the senses, and render one more eager than before to join the expedition; moreover, a general enlivenment is created on these occasions, which extends to every

inhabitant, young and old, of the town of Tobermory. The commander of the Highlander, leaving the assembled crowd on the beach, set steam and shaped his course towards the domain of the Laird of Col, at the mouth of the bay, where having received on board a fair charge, consisting of two young ladies, he continued, for the credit of the vessel, and the amusement of the spectators, to sweep round and round in circles, on the bosom of this inland lake, whereby the remainder of the passengers were obliged to put off from the shore, and go on board in a boat. The manœuvre was merely intended as a preliminary to the actual movement, thereby to instigate the loitering, and determine the wavering passenger, and by all and every fair means, to collect recruits. Accordingly, small boats were seen on their way from various points on shore, containing some youths who leaped on deck with faces half shaved, and others en deshabille; and even many among the ladies, whose dress, after they came on board, needed trifling adjustment. These services were mutually rendered to each other; a little button fastened here, another there, and those well directed, dexterous twitches inflicted on garments, wherewith female fingers alone, skilled to compose the folds of drapery, are wont to excel. At least half a dozen skiffs thus arrived in succession; containing for the most part younger branches of families, bedecked in white dresses, bearing green parasols, and advancing with a serpentine waddling gait through the water, as the native clown, tugging vigorously at the oar, plainly testified exuberance of lusty strength over nautical skill. Of these, one or two remained in our wake even after we had started, till seeing we were in right earnest,

the boatmen, relaxing suddenly from their labours, lay on their oars far astern, in despair, each from a small speck on the waves, regarding with lingering interest the line of our progress, and then returning with flagging stroke disappointed to his home.

Fascinated either by Highland beauty, or Highland scenery, the young ladies in the foreground or the venerable mountains in the distance, it was hardly without regret, as many persons remained on deck, that in obedience to the captain's announcement, I found it necessary to partake of breakfast in the cabin below,—that magnificent repast, welcomed by the healthy, nauseated by the puling debauchee, whereof moderate excess is the legitimate offspring of temperance; that meal whereat we all now joined heart and hand to enjoy, as if there were no such thing to be met with as a dinner in Scotland.

Steering round Callioch Head, we soon arrived in the neighbourhood of the Treshnish islands, Fladda, Lunga, and the Dutchman's Cap; and afterwards caught a view of Staffa, whose flat tabular surface supported on lofty perpendicular cliffs, protruding abruptly from the sea, has an extraordinary and remarkable appearance. Far beyond, as we pursued our course, the shadowy outline of a square church tower loomed indistinctly on the horizon through the mist, and becoming clearer by degrees, as we made steady progress on our voyage, the figure of the cathedral of Iona reared itself in full view. In form the edifice might seem a moderate sized English country church, although in size beyond the lowly steeples in the vicinity, and out of proportion with the small remote island whereon it is erected.

Although it was proposed, with reference to the low state of the flood tide, to postpone the visit to Staffa till our return from Iona, in the meantime, passing close to the cliffs, we obtained an excellent view of the Buchaille, or Herdsman's Rock, and of the entrance, as we weathered the angle at the extremity of the island, of Fingall's Cave. The former of these objects consists of a huge heap of broken basaltic columns, that, like a little mountain of thunderbolts, lie heaped in the form of an obtuse cone, about forty feet high, a few yards from the shore. The channel here between Staffa and the island of Mull, is apparently about four miles wide ; and the Buchaille, in conjunction with the oblique slant visible at that part of the cliffs of Staffa, bears evident testimony of that mighty shock, when in former ages, either by the agency of the earthquake or volcano, it was riven from the parent land.

The most lively imagination, even at the first sudden view of Fingall's Cave, is completely gratified ; yet I cannot pretend to convey to the reader more than a faint idea of the impressions I received from the spectacle. I had by no means anticipated so near resemblance to the works of art, as is exhibited by the fluted basaltic columns that form this splendid arch. The elegance of its form, as if the work of fairies or of giants, seems expressly fashioned to bear the ponderous weight of that superincumbent mass or crust, the stupendous crown of rock that reposes upon its apex ; serving as it were as a model to the architect to shew the aptitude of the curve for mighty pressure. It is a spot appropriately identified with the wild poetry of Ossian, and calculated above all things to recall to

the memory the melodies of Calcot, or the voice of the deep-toned Bartleman. I gazed upon the object with pure astonishment, till gliding onwards on our way the cave grew indistinct, the Buchaille and Island altogether sank deeper and deeper in the waters, and finally the outline on the horizon once more vanished in shadow.

Curiosity, from this period henceforward, already sufficiently excited, never again gained time to cool, and no sooner were former objects of interest lost in mist, than the Island of Iona claimed our attention ; whose shores are perfectly flat, and the beach, when seen from a distance, is covered with sand so purely white as to be readily mistaken for chalk.

On arriving within a few fathoms of Iona, the channel being about a quarter of a mile wide, the Highlander's anchor was dropped, and we went on shore in a boat ; the water the whole way from the vessel being resplendently clear, and rendered still more pellucid in appearance by the whiteness of the sand below, and the huge blocks of granite rock, that here and there protrude from the bottom. We landed upon a flat shoal of this material, which circumstance, as the tide happened to be low, and several ladies, some of them old ones, belonged to our party, might be called inauspicious. A more perilous and slippery path, under the ordinary contingencies of every day life, is rarely encountered. Sometimes it was necessary to step across deep chasms, with no better footing on the opposite side than a rudely pointed fragment of stone ; at others we proceeded along apparently flat, even pavement, abounding in watery snares for the unwary, and from which, in fact, caution the most vigilant was insuffi-

cient protection. Here some of the party dropped mid-leg deep into hidden pools, covered deceitfully by the broad slippery leaves of sea-weed ; others, squeezing under their feet the bloated bags or cists attached to some marine plants, squirted water as high as their own and their neighbours' heads, or still higher, bespattering their clothes and faces ; and one or two persons, too confident in their activity, rolled over on their backs, and got a sound ducking. Gallantry itself was paralyzed as regarded the ladies, who each proceeded alone the best manner she could, in a predicament wherein not even the skill of Archimedes, without a single attainable point of resistance, could have rendered her assistance. On they all went, with a mineing gait, as if groping their way in the dark, some tittering, others lamenting, so that, with slipping and splashing, in despite of vigilance and timidity, certainly not less than once in every three or four steps, ill surely came of it to some of the party, either one way or another.

A group of children, chiefly little girls, each with a plate in her hand containing pebbles and shells for sale, had already collected on the shore, and were standing in a line to receive us. Among these specimens, the light green stone especially, peculiar to the island, was in tolerable abundance, though it is singular, considering these are purchased with avidity by the numerous travellers who visit the spot, that any should now remain. Of all it may be observed, that although in the spirit of hard dealing, artfully wetted with sea-water to improve their brillianey, they are of better than ordinary quality.

As the buildings, the objeet of our present visit, are within three or four stones' throw of the shore, our

purpose after once being fairly landed was speedily effected, the which was so far fortunate, inasmuch as the period allotted by the captain to this portion of our day's business, was not more than sufficient to perfect the end proposed, without affording any individual an opportunity of walking round or even across this very small island. We accordingly immediately proceeded en masse to the celebrated ruins of the Cathedral, the Chapel of St. Obans, and the Nunnery. The upper surface of the land appeared to be chiefly the aforesaid white sand, covered by natural, sweet, tender herbage, and abounding in mineral substances containing mica especially in large proportion. Of the stones, many of a greenish tinge, with which, loosely laid one upon another, the walls are composed, I hardly observed two exactly alike, excepting those of red granite, which material is universally predominant. In one place, in an excavation dug on the side of a bank, I saw a stratum two feet thick of perfect fossil shells. The habitations consisted only of a few small cottages, although, as if preparatory to an increase of population, a small village church had recently been endowed, and a neat manse-house built for the clergyman.

It is impossible to approach these venerable ruins without a sensation of respect and awe, on contrasting sublime designs of architecture, and grand monumental reliques, with the humility of the remote spot whereon they have been placed, a spot which, to former generations, and before the invention and aid of steam, might be considered by the inhabitants of the south nearly as inaccessible as Iceland. It is extraordinary to witness a display of ornamental sepulchres here in this land of mist and storm, apart

until recently from the civilized world, yet calculated, in regard to workmanship and design, to do honour to the most celebrated of our ecclesiastical edifices, whether of York, Canterbury, Wells, Westminster Abbey, or elsewhere. Some are within the cathedral, the greater part in the burying ground outside ; however, the outer walls of the former building alone remain, so that these receive no manner of shelter. The ruins of durable red granite are in excellent preservation, together with various arches within, fretted work, and columns exquisitely chiseled ; a forbearance, whether on the part of time or of the marauder, rather to be attributed to the hardness of the material, than the protection of the constituted authorities. Although not versed, even to a limited extent, in antiquarian lore, I could not divest myself of a feeling of sincere regret, on witnessing the more than apathetic neglect of this magnificent cemetery, wherein the tombs are exposed at present to absolute degradation. Here, in a country where want of respect to ancestry is by no means a national failing, the reliques of the mighty dead, of the dignified priesthood of former days, and of Norwegian kings, are actually lying unprotected from the wind and rain, unhallowed from desecration by the boisterous intruder, and deserted by the lords of the soil, their natural protectors. Surely, even were it considered objectionable to remove these monuments to a secure though distant spot, it were incumbent on somebody or some persons to gird the whole precincts with a fence or wall, and throw a roof above those tombs deposited in the cathedral. The latter expedient, since the walls are yet sound, even though slightly

performed, would answer good purpose, and be effected at small expense.

One instance of thoughtless damage fell under my own observation. Having picked up a large stone that attracted my attention, I was retiring towards a natural rock for the purpose of breaking it, when a young lithsome Scotsman, perceiving my object, with extraordinary civility interfered, requesting me to allow him to perform the office. I accordingly delivered him the fragment, when, being near-sighted, he first held it close to his nose, then gave it two or three tosses and turns till he had perfectly satisfied himself as to its grain and texture. Without more ado he then spat in his hand, and hurled it with all his force against one of the supine effigies that reclined below, which manœuvre split it into half a dozen pieces. The feat was so uncalled for, and in fact so outrageous, that I was really shocked and surprised withal that no one present noticed the wanton trespass. Such in fact it was, although instigated by sheer geod nature. It may be asked of our guide why did he not interfere? and so probably he would, if not engaged elsewhere. Formerly a schoolmaster in Mull, and learned in the first place in ancient inscriptions, he was at the time too busily occupied in expounding epitaphs to the inquisitive; secondly, our party consisting of about thirty persons, were too ubiquitous a body to be submitted to control; and thirdly, the space over which all had free range was too unlimited, to enable him, without the eyes of Argus, to exercise superintendence.

The above-mentioned crew, who had gradually increased to the present force from different parts of

the coast during the voyage from Tobermory, now prepared, after three quarters of an hour expended at Iona, to commence embarkation. All were successfully carried in two trips of the boat on board the Highlander, whose paddles, then again put in motion, never ceased to thump the waves, till she hove to and dropped anchor a furlong's distance from Fingall's Cave at Staffa. Here again was immediately performed another landing expedition, whereupon all were so eager to go on shore by the first conveyance, that in the course of one minute the skiff was filled with as many persons as she could conveniently hold, and then two or three stepped in, in despite of remonstrance, into the bargain. More actually would have followed, had not the captain, finding it was of as little avail to stand still saying "hoot, hoot," as whistle, waxing wrath and red in the face, forcibly dragged back the invaders by the collar. Fortunately the weather and the tide were both favourable, whereby we were enabled to land at the entrance of the cave without difficulty, which object is impracticable unless at particular periods of the ebb and flood, and while the sea is more than usually calm.

As we approached the entrance of the cavern, wherein the sea enters like a river, a heavy ground swell agitated the boat with so violent a motion, as plainly to show, the wind having been for some time past perfectly still, the precarious nature of access under other circumstances; for not only do the waves at this spot bound and reverberate against the cliffs, but the cavern regurgitates the mighty volume of water that enters within its ample throat, propelling it outwards in a flood of resistance against the advancing billows. So great was the reaction on the

present occasion, that steadiness and activity were indispensable on the part of every person in the boat, to catch the precise moment of stepping out cleverly upon the rugged causeway on one side of the cavern, and to take advantage of the alternate heaving of the swell. This causeway extends the whole length within, like the side-path of a canal, and being formed of the broken surfaces of basaltic columns of unequal lengths, which nevertheless increase in height from the centre outwards, the adventurer may proceed according to his fancy, either ascending nearly to the summit of the roof, or keeping the lower level. The water below, of an unusually pale green, is quite clear, so that the bottom, about ten or twelve feet deep, is distinctly discernible. The dimensions of this splendid vault are so extensive, that although there is no other aperture to admit light than the entrance, a person standing at its mouth and looking within, even to its farther extremity, may clearly define its proportions, beautiful in architectural symmetry, and regular as the honey-comb.

I am free to confess I preferred this mode, to advancing in the interior; considering, as regards position, that of the two ends of any given straight line, it were well at all times to select the more convenient,—a principle which may be turned to special account in matters of altitude. To scan the dimensions of a lofty mountain standing at the base, is perhaps equally profitable as to ascend its rugged sides, supposing the sole object of the traveller, as is frequently the case, be merely to say he has been there. At all events, here, on the exact spot whereon I landed from the boat, I remained, edified by the magnificent spectacle within, and amused by the ap-

pearance created by our party, ladies and gentlemen, some above and some below, at various degrees of elevation, as if suspended one above another in the air on an undefined foundation. As they poked their way along, apparently with much hesitation, one might have imagined all in considerable jeopardy; nevertheless, progress was free from danger by reason of the rough, sound footing afforded by the surface of the columns whereon they trod.

Since the eye collects its materials with great rapidity, and nothing is to be effected within the cavern, but walk to the extreme end and then back again, the exploring party in a short space of time returned perfectly satisfied, and in a quarter of an hour from the moment of disembarkation, were ready again for departure. Previously to betaking ourselves to the boat, it was our plan to ascend the heights on the summit of the island.

The site of Fingall's Cave is close to an angular point of the cliffs, round which it was now necessary to clamber the best manner we could, in order to descend upon a narrow strip of beach, which in some places three or four, in others thirty or forty yards wide, hereabouts surrounds the island at its base. With this object in view, a plank was laid across a chasm otherwise impassable, over which the party proceeded cautiously one after another, each person steadyng himself by a boat-hook held by two sailors at each opposite end to serve as a guard or rail. The above was a ticklish contrivance, for though the men extended the pole across from shoulder to shoulder, their footing was so precarious, and the plank so unsteadily supported on the rock, that I much question, in case of stress being

actually laid on the former, if all three persons had not been soured in the water. Everybody walked across without disaster, and descended upon the aforesaid beach, wherefrom the cliffs above, entirely composed of basaltic columns, rise in figure and elevation resembling the highest of those of chalk in Kent and Sussex. Making progress within the base of the Buchaille, for the distance of three or four hundred yards, we arrived at the spot whence access to the summit of the cliffs was now to be made by those persons adventurous in spirit, by aid of the broken shafts of the basaltic columns, which afford an extremely irregular footing all the way to the top. I would by no means recommend a stranger to make this experiment, but rather to advance quietly a little farther, to a spot whence a winding but regular path safely conducts him to the table land above.

Notwithstanding the celebrity of this basaltic formation, the individual columns are by no means so perfect as those of the Giant's Causeway in Ireland, at which latter place each block is as true as if cast in a mould, the convex end of each joint resting in the other's concavity with the same precision as vertebrae in the back-bone of a horse. In the cabins in the vicinity, pieces of these naturally formed joints are frequently used to serve the purpose of a seat; but portable and durable as these specimens are, it is singular, few are to be met with in England. One pair, and extremely good ones, are in the Natural History Museum in Manchester, but with the exception of these, I never remember meeting elsewhere with another. At the Giant's Causeway the surfaces, or horizontal sections of the columns, are perfect polygons, regular, rectilinear

figures ; but here at Staffa, the angles being generally ill-defined, the planes more resemble the sawed-off trunks of trees.

For my own part, I had no particular reason for making the ascent in question, but because the same freak was performed by many, among others, ladies ; wherefore difficulty and danger at any rate seemed out of the question. Nevertheless, the contrary in the end turned out to be the case, and as in those instances in common life where there are many ways to one object, liberty of choice is frequently repaid by injudicious selection, so here, by reason of the inequality of the broken shafts, he who followed the steps of many leaders profited by the example of none. For a considerable distance I proceeded prosperously enough, ascending from the broken surface of one column, *ad libitum* to that most convenient above, and thus I went on mounting pillar after pillar, without feeling the least necessity of looking behind, obtaining a firm hold invariably for the feet and fingers, till I reached a considerable height from the ground. The edges of the columns at first were not only horizontal, but frequently somewhat concave towards the centre ; but the planes increasing in obliquity towards the summit, the grip at last grew so awfully insecure, that I was necessarily constrained, particularly as I was unable to trace my way back, to pause for a moment and look around. In point of fact, the fair sex on the present occasion were the innocent cause of bringing me to such an extremely awkward predicament, that without being able to proceed with convenience and safety either way, a slight puff of wind where I at present stood might have effectually disturbed my

equilibrium. I gave place during the ascent to one lady, lent a helping hand to another, and paid so much general attention to the progress of all, that I had taken a devious course meanwhile myself, and wandered out of the right way altogether. Even now I had no sooner, in order to shape my steps aright, looked perpendicularly upwards, than regard to propriety immediately compelled me again to look down, as these Highland damsels, striding like hunters of the Alps from crag to crag, displaying a degree of agility that would have done honour to Taglioni, necessarily exhibited their fair forms in very curious and extraordinary attitudes. At all events I considered myself fortunate so soon as I arrived prosperously on the top of the precipice, particularly as a plethoric pursy person for some time stuck close to my rear, and continued awfully to snuffle and blow within reach of my skirts.

The trouble of scaling these heights is repaid by a lovely prospect in fine weather; the day during our whole excursion had been more than usually propitious; and as the fragrant sea breeze swept this elevated spot, the most enchanting scenery appeared in the distance that heart could desire. The island of Rum and her smaller sisters of these western Hebrides, whereon good grouse-shooting is to be had at little cost, inasmuch as, provided the sportsman taketh not with him people to eat the birds, means are found wanting when killed to convey them away, exhibited afar off almost every variety of mountain traery; while the contiguous island of Mull, with her peculiarly shaped hills, displayed a series of rounded summits and serrated ridges, extending as far as the eye could reach along the horizon, and in al-

titude till their tops were lost in the clouds. And what can any lover of the picturesque wish for more?

Although on viewing from a vessel at sea the island of Staffa, the surface appears perfectly flat, the appearance on surmounting the elevation is of an extensive plain, occasionally varied by gentle risings and concavities, covered with excellent herbage, and setting entirely apart the associations of Fingall and his abode, a most delectable spot for summer residence. Deep-rooted in the sea, fortified by inaccessible cliffs, and with soil quite sufficient for the purposes of agriculture, one might imagine the site even preferable for a church establishment to that of Iona. The grass is indeed particularly fine, in some places short and tufted, in others, especially along the banks of the hollows, even rank and dark coloured. In one particular spot I observed a bed of black peat, from whence a considerable quantity had already been dug. About a dozen head of small horned cattle as wild and active as deer, remarkable for their beauty, and smaller than the Alderney breed, seemed by bounding and leaping away at the approach of strangers, to enjoy by right of inheritance, and unmolested, the free pasture of the soil. These cattle were, however, as we perceived afterwards, together with as many sheep and a goat, under the guardianship of an old woman and a young girl, both of whom, by the way, were in appearance as wild and timorous as themselves. If not inhabitants of a cave in some concealed nook within the territory, these native shepherdesses were probably ferried across daily from the island of Mull in a boat; on this point I endeavoured to get information, but was un-

able to obtain a reply from either. At any rate, neither house, cabin, nor tenement of any description was to be seen on this island.

A more liberal portion of time being here allotted to our party than on the island of Iona, I wandered away from my companions to the verge of the opposite cliffs, and here keeping in a line with the sea-shore, I saw abundance of sea-birds, and in many places, strewed on the grass, in heaps of a bushel or more together, the shells of periwinkles and limpets that they had devoured. At last I arrived at a delightful grassy spot not more than a few yards removed from the precipice, yet as inviting to meditation and repose as if it were far inland. It was a deep abrupt hollow, quarried by the hand of nature and carpeted with luxuriant herbage; and here I seated myself for a few minutes to enjoy the serene stillness of solitude, excluded from every feature in the landscape but the sky above. As I listened to the waves' alternate heavings on the shore, as it were the respiration of the ocean, a sound suddenly struck upon my ear as of a human being drowning in the sea below; and, conversant as I was with the cause, the tone was so perfectly human, that for a few seconds I was really deceived. However, starting on my feet, I no sooner gained the edge of the cliff, than I saw a herd of seals swimming backwards and forwards and sporting in the water.

Surely the intonation of no other animal in nature so closely resembles the human voice as that of the seal; and yet it is a wild unearthly howl, uttered as this wonderful creature rears its close cropped head above the waves, and surveys with a cautious yet eager gaze the world around him. Most people at

one or other time in their lives have seen a seal, especially in rough weather, off a rocky coast, turning its head continually from side to side as it moves along, a link between two distinct orders in creation. Many a time in early days have I watched hour after hour of the wintery day on the sea-shore, in the vain hope of surprising for a moment their ever watchful sagacity, but once only had I an opportunity of observing the extraordinary faculties of the animal when in a state of domestication. The opportunity afforded me on the occasion alluded to was so perfectly satisfactory, that I will venture here to relate the particulars.

A healthy, young, full-grown seal, very few years ago, either temporarily tired of the company of his acquaintance, or fatigued by exercise, abandoned one morning for a time his patrimonial territory near the Reculvers on the coast of Kent, and clambering or floundering out of the sea upon a plate of flat rock adjoining the new pier or jetty at Herne Bay, there inconsiderately lay down to sleep. In this helpless state he was unfortunately surprised by a sturdy fisherman, who without more ado, though unassisted by comrade or auxiliary of any description, determined on securing the prisoner; and to that end, drawing from his shoulders an impenetrable pea-jacket, lined within by the stoutest drugget, fortified without by indurated blotches of tar and pitch, and double patched moreover across the elbows, stealthily approached the monster, threw the garment over his body, simultaneously fell upon and grappled his victim after the fashion of a bear, and bore him away in triumph. The poor seal, roused from peaceful slumber, his visions of coral rocks and crystal palaces in

a moment dissevered, and the lively prospects of youth thus vanished for ever, made all the resistance in a seal's power, but every effort was in vain ; nevertheless, with teeth clogged with pitch, and fins pinioned close to his sides, he soundly flapped the fisherman's boots with his heavy wet tail. After all, the conqueror placed him in a cart and conveyed him to Brighton.

It was there I visited him, not only once a-day but several times a-day, and not only thus of one day, but of many days during the period while, at the small charge of three pence each person, he was exhibited under a tent erected on the sea-shore, on that part of the cliff immediately below Regency Square. I never witnessed a spectacle more universally popular, or resorted to with fewer restrictions as to rank or station ; the spectators consisting of persons grave and idle of all descriptions, lords and ladies, masters and mistresses, governesses, servants, nursery-maids, and tribes of little children.

The animal was placed in a large deal vat, well caulked and pitched withinside, secured at the top with a strong moveable grating of iron wire, and half filled with sea-water. His favourite position when undisturbed was floating on his belly, the upper part of the head stretched forwards flat upon the water, his nostrils remaining barely above the surface. His whiskers and coal-black eyes, the latter usually steady and fixed, were not unlike those of the water-rat. The eyes nevertheless were quite flat, as it were pieces of jet set in stone ; when motionless, reflecting a senseless glare, but animated by eagerness or alarm, expressive as the eyes of a dog ; commanding a view moreover before and behind and on every side, and gathering a peculiar look of archness and

sagacity by a wrinkle formed by the pressure of the orbs against the fatty part of their circumference. The mouth displayed two characters ; of the quadruped, and of the fish ; the teeth partaking of the former, and the tongue and gums, as to their deep red colour, belonging to the latter. The tongue, moreover, was thick and short, like the tongue of a fish. The nostrils, most curiously formed, possessed the power of excluding air as well as water, the orifices, opening and shutting at will, being capable of extraordinary dilatation, and the cartilage so pliable, as when in full stretch, to give to the aperture an opposite line of direction ; which peculiarity may be also observed in the mouth of a serpent. Through the nostrils alone he breathed, inhaling at very irregular intervals, remaining sometimes for two or three minutes together without breathing at all.

Compared to the physical properties above described, the moral qualities were considerably more extraordinary ; and it was wonderful to observe the rapidity of transition wherewith this apparently senseless mass of blubber, suddenly relinquishing the torpid nature of the fish, became enlightened with the intelligence of the dog. Indeed the head in form and motion bore exact resemblance to that of a cropped Danish coach-dog. The change was instantaneous ; now lying on the water an inanimate log, in a single moment Proteus-like he started up a different animal. A long flexible neck protruded itself from hitherto shapeless proportions, whereon the head turned from side to side lively and active, and the whole form, endued with the attitude and gait of the quadruped, became replete with newly found and rapid action.

In a corner of the tent lay the creature's food, and the common expression, "as fat as a seal," was compatible with the alacrity wherewith he devoured flukes and flounders, at all hours in the day. No seal was ever fatter than he, and the keeper, a good-natured fellow, ever ready to feed his prisoner and oblige the public, supplied him abundantly with food. No dog ever watched the expected morsel with more eagerness on its way from the hand of his master, than did the seal attend to the motions of whomsoever approached the corner where his food lay; marking the individual incessantly round and round the tent until he obtained his desire. When a large flounder was presented to him, he took it from the hand with the air of a well bred dog, closing his teeth upon it gently,—at the same time, it must be confessed, holding it so firmly, that it was out of the question to endeavour to take it again from him. In short, his was altogether the manner of a dog, and like a dog he used his fins as paws, holding the fish firmly between them, and tearing off the skin with his teeth. After he had skinned the fish he bolted each mouthful whole, without an effort to bite, or apparently any desire to taste it.

"Over!" said the keeper, as he occasionally brandished a thick cudgel over his head, whereat the poor seal rolled over in his tank obediently, keeping an eye continually on the stick, and moaning in a lamentable key, a tone indeed peculiarly hideous, the water gurgling in his throat, as of a human being drowning; meanwhile, every look and turn evinced the intelligence of the quadruped, and particularly attachment and subservience to man.

One word still remains to be said of his fins; used

as cleverly as arms, as has been already observed, with regard to skinning the flounders. Each fin is armed with five claws, long and of equal length, like those of a bear, and consequently resembling in no very remote degree the human hand. The resemblance of the seal or sea-calf to the calf, consists only in the voice, and the voice of the calf is certainly not dissimilar to that of a man; therefore the connexion of the seal with humanity is perhaps farther preserved by the Greek word signifying a man being $\phi\omega\varsigma$, and a seal $\phi\omega\kappa\eta\eta$. But the claws of the seal, as well as the hand, are like a lady's back hair comb, wherefore, altogether, supposing the resplendence of sea-water streaming down its polished neck on a sunshiny day the substitute for a looking-glass, we arrive at once at the fabulous history of the marine maiden, or mermaid, and the appendages of her toilet.

To investigate animal life, and animal faculties, is at all times a pleasing speculation, particularly in the case of the seal, a being not only amphibious in habits, but, in form partaking in triple proportion the character of the finny tribe, yet doomed by Providence to bear to the remote depths of ocean the sagacity of quadrupeds.

With regard to the organs required for amphibious respiration, an opportunity was afforded me during the last summer of seeing in the private collection of specimens of comparative anatomy, the most valuable perhaps at present in England, belonging to Dr. Taylor, at Manchester, a beautiful preparation of the lungs of a turtle; a wonderful exemplification of the mechanism necessary for subaqueous existence. The whole fabric, owing to the increased size of the air vessels, infinitely more spongy than is the case in land

animals, exactly resembles, as relates to consistence, a conglomerated mass of the finer filaments of moss or sea-weed, and in colour a piece of delicately white honey-comb, when dry and free from honey.

Here also I saw skeletons of an albatross, and of other birds; the former shewing the extreme difference in weight of bone, according to the exigency of each particular species, whether for the purposes of protracted flight, or otherwise. The bone in question, a wing bone, of a bird destined to float in the air, almost continually on its pinions, though in size as big as the leg-bone of a sheep, the knob at either end being even still larger, was nevertheless so delicately light, that in substance hardly exceeding that of a common quill, it really felt in the hand, as if a puff of air would have blown it away.

Here also was a preparation of the stomach and bowels of a boa constrictor, or rather the entire bowel of the reptile, for they have no separate stomach, guts and haggis being as it were all in one piece, the latter suddenly expanding so as to form the bag, in a state of nature capable probably of great expansion; the present, hardly exceeding in size an ordinary pig's bladder. The formation of the glands set apart for the secretion of saliva, so copiously required by serpents for the purposes of deglutition, must be highly curious; indeed, to the quantity of saliva so applied, I have it in my power to bear testimony; as will appear by one more short anecdote, wherewith I will close this digression.

In a former volume I related a feat, that of swallowing a rabbit, performed by a boa constrictor. On

the present occasion I saw three rabbits, tied together by a string, bolted in the same manner. However, as the tale may appear somewhat marvellous, I will state the place where it happened, attested by scores of inhabitants, and the date, namely, on the 5th of July, 1836, in the town of Derby. A clumsy fellow, the proprietor of a travelling caravan, anxious, as he said, "to give the serpent a good blow out," so soon as the head of one rabbit was fairly within its jaws, attached to the hind legs by a piece of thick rope-yarn, the fore legs of another newly killed, and thus of three in succession. The experiment ended in disappointment, for the boa, so soon as the last rabbit was fairly down, without farther ceremony opened his mouth to the full extent of his jaws, and puked all three up again. I am quite sure that the quantity of saliva expended in this operation was not less than half a gallon, wherewith the disgorged rabbits' hides were as thoroughly saturated, as if parboiled in a cauldron.

I would willingly have loitered about this wild seagirt spot the entire day, but since the hour of departure was now at hand, the Highlander's passengers received signal accordingly to hasten to their rendezvous. Instead of descending to the sea-shore by our former line of escalade from the beach, we returned by the narrow beaten path before mentioned, walking easily, one after another like wild ducks, along a winding track from the summit of the cliffs to their base. Here we found the boat already in readiness, and the boatmen anxious to be gone.

The Highlander, meanwhile, embedded on the calm sea, lay quietly at anchor a quarter of a mile distant, restraining her black smoke within her own

bowels, and as if sympathising with the serenity of nature, spreading upwards a soft wreath of white vapour, in fleecy columns upon the clear blue sky. The first batch of passengers were speedily in their places, and with alacrity the stout rowers returned for the remainder. These, in consequence of bad arrangement, consisted of a considerable majority of the party. In the former instance of disembarkation, the balance of numbers rested the other way ; in both cases the distribution was unequal, and at all events, now, inconvenience was to be endured. Though stimulated before by the excitement of novelty, now that curiosity was gratified people were prone to delay ; and he who on going on shore figured combatively among the first ranks, was now a laggard and careless to depart. The consequence accordingly was, that on this the boat's second trip, after our rear-guard were got together, the live cargo proved greater than was altogether convenient, wherefore to trim the boat, and arrange the stowage, required not a little adjustment.

At last, when all were seated in their places, still agitated by the inshore swell, a frown on the coekswain's countenance betokened that something yet was wrong, and as he still hesitated to depart, it appeared that one individual of the party, a loiterer still on shore, most vexatiously caused the delay.

The truant was an uncouth, learned man, whom I had often during our voyage remarked in fits of abstraction and reverie ; a geologist, I presume, from the interest he bestowed on fragments of rock and pebbles, which, gloating upon as if they were apples, he would daintily twist round in his fingers immediately close to his nose. He was dressed in a suit of

rusty black, with thick soled shoes, ribbed worsted stockings, and small unstarched cravat, that fitted his neck like a rope. His inexpressive countenance was agitated by natural contortions, vexing as it were capriciously his cheeks and ears. Though abundantly silent, while others were engaged in conversation, frequently, apropos to nothing at all, he would display an extraordinary smile, a gleam of simplicity, meanwhile illuminating a wide mouth, and large teeth, that in my mind distinctly likened him to Scott's portrait of the creature Dougal, in *Rob Roy*. Amused by his own reflections, or delighted by a geological specimen, his features responded invariably by a laugh, which muscular effort served besides for all other possible contingencies,—joy, sorrow, acquiescence, denial, or what not ; and particularly, whenever asked any sort of question, instead of words, a laugh was the only reply ;—a laugh like a sudden puff of gunpowder, the snort of a porpoise, or the peculiar bark of a pig, if incautiously stumbled upon, concealed under the straw.

Of this individual we were now waiting the pleasure, when we perceived him, as our boat was uncomfortably bobbing up and down in the water, obstinately, as if on purpose to try our patience, not only disregarding hailings and hallooings, like a man stone deaf, but actually wandering away in a wrong direction. At first, since his eyes were bent towards the earth, we concluded he was looking for pebbles, and the general wish was to push off without him, but as at last it became evident by his manner that he had actually lost something, which article might be his watch or his purse, or something of still greater value, courtesy and good fellowship

demanded forbearance and additional law. Indulgence was, however, quite thrown away. The cock-swain, having been restrained from departure to the present period not without difficulty, would now positively wait no longer; and accordingly, after warning the delinquent once for all to come on board, under pain of being left behind, we actually commenced progress towards the steamer. The geologist merely replied to the latter injunction by a wave of the hand, and a fretful shake of the head, and then down again went his eyes, upon the beach as before; but so soon as he perceived that we were really gone in right earnest, roused as if awakened from a dream, he instantly bellowed to be taken on board. We had now already proceeded some distance from the shore, the boat considerably overladen, being nearly gunwale to, though the sea was perfectly calm. Many of our passengers, moreover, were ladies, whose convenience it was imperative to consider; wherefore a proposal so perfectly unreasonable as to row back towards this land lubber, being scouted without a division, the rowers, bending their necks upon the oars, replied by laughter to his gestures and ridiculous grimaces.

Meanwhile, various were the opinions regarding the man on shore. Some said he was mad; others thought him only selfish; while a few imagined it possible that Cupid, the crafty analyst of stony hearts, had inflicted him with tender fantasies with reference to the young shepherdess, and that perhaps assailed by love at first sight, he had determined to remain at Staffa for ever and for aye, tend lambkins in sweet converse with the short-skirted Highland damsel during the livelong day, and employ his

time when sated with amorous dalliance, in whistling tender melodies upon the flute: at any rate, instant preparations were made for departure.

The creaking capstan had accordingly performed its office, and the paddles commenced their rotatory motion, when Caliban flung about his arms in despair, and roared for mercy's sake in so dolorous a key, that whether he succeeded in melting the hard heart of the captain, or whether his passage-money might be still perchance unpaid, at all events the commander gave the word to stop the vessel's way, and dispatched the boat ashore, manned by a couple of clumsy fellows like himself, fool or philosopher, to bring him away.

On the return of the party, the rope was scarcely thrown from the vessel, when the captain immediately ordered to give way, whereby the boat was dragged violently through the water, and a meed of punishment exercised on the offender, who, with clothes well splashed, was coarsely hauled up the vessel's side. Treated somewhat despitefully, he no sooner arrived on deck than he sat himself down assiduously to dry with a handkerchief his moistened garments, and continued so occupied while the captain and passengers crowded round him in a body, each intensely curious to know what manner of accident had detained him on shore. His silence was inexorable; he responded to none. "What had ye drappit?" enquired the captain. The other gave no answer but a grin, whereupon the former had recourse to his mull with a look of serious displeasure. "Hoot, hoot, man alive," he rejoined violently, begriming his nose with snuff till it became the colour of the fungus known by the name of the

devil's snuff-box, "what for you no come on board; what the deevil garred ye no come on board?" The geologist replied to this latter question by an interjectional snigger, and at the same time extended his right arm with a significant gesture. Curiosity was appeased. The lost article was found. It was a cotton umbrella!

While, as Julius Cæsar used to say, these matters proceeded by land and by sea, the black cook, perspiring copiously within his narrow dominions below, produced the result of his toil—an excellent dinner. Some people in the world are so fastidious as to object altogether to a repast served by a black cook, and more especially a hot, black cook; others, on the contrary, whether the cook be hot or whether he be black, care very little about the matter. Of the latter description of persons were most of the passengers on board the Highlander. For my own part, I had some consolation in reflecting, that the viands now laid upon the table, by reason of natural covering, bid defiance to contamination from the fragrant artist: for example—a fine fresh salmon rejoicing in his silvery skin, and a steaming dish of potatoes in their impenetrable russet garments.

Refreshed by food and whiskey, our day's expedition was drawing to a close. We had still, however, to experience the delight of gliding, amid the serene stillness of a summer's evening, through a beautiful portion of the voyage; for the sea, here bounded by the shores of Mull, mountainous to the water's edge, assumes for the most part the appearance of a magnificent lake. As we approached the Sound, several small skiffs, each manned by one or two men or boys, who, with no other apparatus than an ordinary hook

and line, were occupied in fishing, floated tranquilly upon the sea. As we passed along, the owners of these small craft occasionally hauled up a line rapidly hand over hand, and disengaged a fish, a yard or more in length, from the end of it. Boats also were now continually arriving from the shore, wherein those ladies and gentlemen who had joined us on the way, were conveyed to their homes; and finally, at nine o'clock in the evening, once more reduced to our original numbers, we entered and dropped anchor in the placid bay of Tobermory.

CHAPTER IX.

A Mull Pony—Path round the Bay—Domain of the Laird of Col—A native Eagle—Mode of preparing Salmon for long Voyages—Establishment of a Lincolnshire Poulterer—Return in the Highlander to Oban—Re-embark on board the Maid of Morven—Tedious Passage to Fitzwilliam—A Handicap in the Dark—Bad Night's Lodging—Fall of Foyers—Royalty in an Omnibus.

SUCH is the extraordinary uneven surface of the Island of Mull, that though it abounds in granite, the very best material in the world for road making, it bids stern defiance to the art of Macadam: at all events, the day has not yet arrived for the science to be put in practice. The less is the wonder that, anxious to hire a horse for an inland excursion, I could find none but a long-backed pony of the cart breed, accustomed only to carry creels of turf upon his back from his infancy, so that in his old age he rolled in walking like a dromedary, and was so inextricately attached to early friendships, that on meeting perchance, no matter where, a troop of his old companions, no power on earth could prevent him from joining the drove; wherefore, to riding on the back of such a sorry beast, I preferred walking along the edge of the bay.

The mountains which surround this beautiful basin rise abruptly from the level of the shore, and extending at their bases in crags and rocky reefs, thence take root as it were in the sea. Free passage is con-

sequently denied to the foot-passengers below upon the beach, but an elevated side-path cut upon the hill's side, and affording a most agreeable promenade, supplies the aforesaid deficiency ; and this path, in some places apparently natural, at others ornamental and artificial, stretches both ways circuitously, a considerable distance from Tobermory ; however, having been kindly furnished by my landlady with a key to the domain of the Laird of Col, I thither bent my way. How brilliant is the pungency imparted by saline particles to the vapid breeze ; the air was replete with the purified exhalation of the sea, while the sun's rays were reflected from unruffled waters, as of an inland lake. Here and there giant rocks overhung the path, that meandered among nooks and hollows ; shrubs and rich verdure sprouted from their fissures, while the rugged precipice above, and the smooth sea below, seemed to present the picture of bluff honesty, conciliating by stern, upright demeanour, the temper of Fortune.

A slight rude fence and gate, constructed of young fir poles, separates the domain of the Laird of Col from the adjacent country. The gate crosses the path, and the fence merely penetrates a little way within the copse, as if it were necessary only to shew, and not enforce, the line of demarcation ; inadequate certainly to repel the wilful intruder, but, in a country where few are prone to invade the limits of domestic privacy, sufficient to consecrate the sanctuary. Within, a bridge of unfashioned logs is thrown across a stream, sparkling at different spots among the distant mountains, marking its tortuous course by glittering cascades bounding downwards from above ; and finally, by aid of a waterfall some-

what enlarged by artificial means, making its last plunge and flinging itself into the sea. Farther on is a boat-house containing wherries, and affording a commodious landing-place for excursions on the bay. Approaching towards the mansion, as the rocks appear less perpendicularly rising from the path than before, the trees by their increased growth make manifest a greater proportion of alluvial soil. The more ancient tenants of these wilds, ash and oak, here send forth from their ivy-grown trunks, huge horizontal limbs that stretch across the path, and from these latter, at right angles, rising perpendicularly, grow other shoots that in size rival young trees. As one proceeds still onwards, the hand of culture by degrees prevails, blending gently and almost imperceptibly with that of nature. Fir trees at first appear among the wild tenants of the wood at irregular intervals, till finally gravel walks diverging into open space, conduct the wanderer through a shrubbery to the precincts of the lawn and flower-garden. The mansion rests on the banks of a picturesque lake, bounded on the opposite side by a precipitous mountain, clad with fir trees to its very summit, and calculated, from its extreme steepness, to display the wonderful property in nature, whereby the vegetative power, acting in the same line, though in a contrary direction to gravity, instead of tending towards the earth, points to the stars.

In chilling solitude, chained by the leg in an open hut of heather, sat a native eagle, whose broad eye became suddenly swollen and dilated at the appearance of a visitor, retaining still, in captivity and misfortune, its inflexible ferocity. In regal dignity, a prisoner in chains, he sternly surveyed in the blue

sky and mountain heights, a lost kingdom,—in sul-
len pomp, like Napoleon in exile, or a fallen angel,

“ *Ceu Lucifer, non spe priorem revisurus locum.*”

I had an opportunity of witnessing within a small building in the outskirts of Tobermory, the mode there adopted of preparing salmon so as to keep fresh, when packed in tin cases, for long voyages, an operation than which none can possibly be more simple, so much so, that where fish are to be had, it may be put in practice in any place and by any body; and in fact the artists in Aberdeen and elsewhere, whose trade is thus to preserve provisions for sea, afford to vend meat of all sorts, fish, and vegetables, at a price so reasonable, that, considering the bone is extracted, and nothing charged for the tin case, an ordinary housekeeper might almost, from motives of sheer economy, be tempted to become a purchaser. Preserved salmon especially, fetches at Aberdeen only twenty pence a pound.

The building in question is merely a shed divided into two compartments on a ground floor, between which a door forms the communication of one with the other. In the first of these chambers, the fish, brought in baskets fresh from the sea, were thrown in heaps upon the floor. Here two men were at work, one of whom gutted the fish and handed them to his companion. The other man standing at a heavy table or dresser, seizing a fish dexterously in his left hand, cut the head clean off by a single sweep of a broad knife, and then, turning it by a toss cleverly round, whipped off its tail in precisely the same manner. Not less adroitly he divided the rest in portions, as nearly as possible two pounds' weight each. He then split each slice, dividing the belly

part perpendicularly ; extracted the bone ; wiped it dry with a cloth ; shook a little salt upon it ; rolled it neatly round ; and placed it in an oval tin canister, in appearance like those commonly used for containing gunpowder. The canister then being put into the scales, the artist adjusted the weight, either more or less as the case might be. Nothing more remained in this apartment to be done, and the canister was handed to the man in the other chamber, for the purpose of being closed. This operator was employed continually in making the canisters, and soldering them in the usual way, without any farther care or precaution than is exercised by an ordinary tinman.

Mere chance, after all, conducted me to the above-mentioned building, of which the entrance being open, I walked in ; in fact I should not probably have observed it at all, but for the loads of fish on men's shoulders then on their way from the boats, and the abundance of refuse and offal that lay on the shore. And thus, frequently, the identical cause that renders a spectacle interesting to a stranger, becomes the very reason that prevents him from seeing it, since people are wont to imagine things necessarily unimportant to others, merely because the same have long since ceased to be regarded as novel by themselves.

I was similarly indebted to the kindness of fortune on another occasion, the particulars whereof I will here introduce, not only in exemplification of the foregoing remark, whereby I was within an acc of passing through Lincolnshire without visiting a slaughter-house of the native geese, but since the subject I am upon is one of comestibles and provisions for the table. Two years ago, while remain-

ing a day in the town of Boston, my attention being then chiefly directed to the gigantic operations that propel the stagnant waters of the fens in artificial rivers to the sea ; I had intended to bend my way to whatever spot I might see to the greatest advantage the means and the effect, whereby the science of drainage has there been conducted to so vast an extent. And having previously visited the noble old church, whose eight spires, airily supported on lantern arches, springing from an octagonal turret, are only equalled by the architectural symmetry within the building, where the whole aisle and transepts, in unbroken space, and under one roof, are supported on lofty pointed arches of exquisite form, I had nothing in fact else to do, when by mere chance, as I have already hinted, my attention was called to the red field of blood, whereon hundreds of poor geese yield up their lives daily, and perish, generation after generation, for the benefit of mankind.

As I was strolling onwards in the direction of the fens, I had hardly proceeded clear of the suburbs of the town, when the busy hum of imprisoned thousands, was borne upon the breeze, as of those multitudinous throngs which, during the depth and intensity of winter, are seen gallantly piercing the snow storm in pointed column, and murmuring in gentle cackle as they plod along. For a moment I attentively listened, but a moment, to ears accustomed to rural sounds, was quite sufficient to reconcile localities, and account for the phenomenon. A few minutes more conducted me to the very spot from whence the sound proceeded, where, on a small plot of ground, a quarter of an acre in extent, a drove of five thousand geese were closely penned like sheep,

cackling their sorrows to the winds, and awaiting their melancholy doom. From a thousand to sixteen hundred a week here die regularly by the hands of the executioner, and, as I learnt upon making enquiry, that, according to arrangement carried into effect by the proprietor of the establishment, three days in every week, of which the morrow was one, were set apart to slaughter, I made up my mind to go the next morning accordingly, and witness the ceremony.

Many a householder exists at the present day in the united kingdom, who, whether his income be large or small, and no matter what his religious and political persuasion, in conformity with irrefragable custom, and under the auspices of our benevolent King William, at least once in each year, at the head of an obedient family, like a mail-coachman mounted on the coach-box on a gala day, sits in the pomp of conjugal and paternal authority, knife and fork in hand, behind a fat, fragrant goose on Michaelmas-day. But little does he reflect, while with glistening eyes and watering chops, his nostrils regaled with exquisite odour, his chest inflated by the consciousness of powerful digestion, his fore-arm resting horizontally flat upon the table, and his implements pointing upwards at right angles towards the ceiling, he ponders and meditates on the first incision, while the eyes of his helpmate, roving anxiously around lest the pinafores of their hungry offspring slip perchance beneath their chins, with gesture more authoritative than elegant he beckons backwards with his thumb across his shoulder, and the perspiring handmaid presents to him the steel; while in anxious silence the wife and children sit patiently watching his

motions and listening to the whistle of the bright blade, and the brisk rat-tat-tat-tat-tat of the aforesaid implement; and finally, though the bird squeaks and hisses on the table, as if it were alive, and the gravy springs at the first cut from its bosom like a stream of blood;—little does he reflect, I say again, as relates to the juicy martyr on his board, upon that dismal tragedy that I will now proceed to relate.

At ten o'clock the next morning, when I arrived on the premises, two hundred and sixty geese had been already barbarously assassinated out of six hundred, the number on that day doomed to die. The dead birds were all plucked, trussed, and laid in order, neatly ranged on shelves, wherewith this, the first and outer apartment, was surrounded. The said apartment communicated by an outer door through the back yard of the premises by a series of wicket gates, to the plot of ground already referred to, and also by partitions with two other chambers, in one of which the geese were killed, and in the other stripped of their feathers. In the first of the two latter chambers, three boys were employed. The first boy, by virtue of his office, drove the geese a dozen at a time from the grand depot into a pen parted off in one corner of the apartment, and these, batch by batch, were usually disposed of as quickly as he could go to the depot and return. The second boy, though in point of fact he acted the part of a hang-man, did nothing more than, taking each goose one by one out of the aforesaid pen, prepare it for execution. To this end, by a dexterous twist, he entangled together the pinions of the bird behind its back, and inserted its legs in one of eight nooses that hung suspended five feet from the ground against the wall,

over a long trough which rested on the floor to catch the blood. The third boy's business was simple and sanguinary,—merely that of cutting throats. Of this young matador, though scarcely twelve years old, the trenchant blade had not only passed across the weasands of all those geese that had already given up the ghost, but ere the sun had passed his meridian, the death-cackle of the whole devoted six hundred had sounded in his ears. His whole care and attention was necessarily occupied with the dying; though frequently unawares and in despite of his best efforts, he received a flapping from a gory neck, or a tingling stream of blood spirted in his eye; whereat his countenance would gleam with a ludicrous expression of alacrity and surprise; he would then compose the limbs of his victims in death with double diligence, yet only precisely so long as they showed by fluttering, in their last moments, a disinclination to behave decently. Afterwards, he allowed every goose to go out of the world in the best manner it could.

So soon as a goose appeared thoroughly dead, its legs were disengaged from the noose to make room for another, when the defunct bird was tossed out of the chamber of death, through a small square window or aperture, that communicated with the plucking-room. Here, behind a large table or dresser sat seven men and one woman, upon low seats, enveloped in a cloud of dust and down, and up to their hips in feathers; wherewith altogether they were covered with such profusion, that among the eight individuals, it was difficult at first sight to point out which was the woman. These people were paid for their labour, as I was told, at the rate of a shilling a score, whereat

such is their dexterity and strength of thumb, that some are able at the aforesaid price, provided they have geese to pluck, to earn ten or twelve shillings a day. As near as I could judge, a goose was plucked naked as a needle in about six minutes ; a plump fat bird at all events every forty or fifty seconds from either one or other of the operators, was pitched heavily on the dresser. Thus the artists, without favour or delay, vigorously pursued their work, while the noise of quills relentlessly ripped from their sockets, sounded like the crackling of a faggot in a baker's oven, or twigs snapped in twain by a lusty donkey, as he bursts through a thicket.

Each goose so soon as plucked was pitched by the plucker, as I have before observed, upon the dresser. Hence it was removed by the man presiding over the first outer apartment already mentioned, and then immediately scientifically trussed and deposited on the shelves.

After witnessing the various operations now described, I paid a short visit to the premises in the rear of these apartments, where a small steam-engine is continually kept at work in the double operation of grinding meal for the geese's food, and stirring and pounding the same into a compost together with potatoes. Three men, moreover, in the yard adjoining, sap green as high as their waistbands, were hard at work loading carts with shovels from a large heap containing at least a dozen waggon loads of pure goose manure.

The reader now will, I trust, have formed an idea of a Lincolnshire poultorer's establishment, although, than the one cited, there are others I believe considerably more extensive. From hence the geese

are dispatched regularly to the London market, packed in baskets containing twenty-five birds each, of which baskets twenty-five also make a waggon load,—in weight, supposing each goose on an average to weigh eleven pounds, upwards of three tons. The waggons are forty-eight hours on the road, and the cargoes, on their arrival, consigned to salesmen, are disposed of to the poulters.

Returning by the Highlander to Oban, the Maid of Morven, in the intervening time since I left her at that place, had performed the remaining part of her voyage to Inverness, returned to Glasgow, and now once more from the latter city, true to her point of rendezvous at Oban, was on her way to the North. I say true to her point of rendezvous, and so the Maid of Morven was, but though the Highlander arrived in the bay in conformity with general arrangements precisely at the hour of noon, the other was far from punctual in respect to the time. Wherefore the passengers reaped no manner of benefit from the captain's alacrity, and with regard to the other operations in progress, it began moreover to appear, that in comparison with the remaining portion of the whole excursion to Inverness from Glasgow, the agreeable part of the voyage was already over.

Matters seemed to be conducted even more untidily than before on board the Maid of Morven, for the vessel had again brought from Glasgow a heavy cargo, and, in addition to the multiplicity of business on hand in shipping and unshipping unwieldy goods, confusion was increased by the absence, and apparently the non-interference of any presiding authority ; and finally, without redress, and in a state of appalling uncertainty, we remained no less a period

than five hours and a half at Oban. At last the captain made his appearance at the water's edge accompanied by a small posse of wrangling companions. Some dispute, it appeared, had taken place about the cargo, whereupon he was heated, worried, and out of temper. Apparently anxious to be rid of the litigants, no sooner had he placed his foot on deck than the impatient waving of his arm caused the tinkling bell to ring, and then in fierce and gloomy silence betaking to his mull, the *Maid of Morven* waddled out of the harbour.

A brief outline henceforward will be sufficient of a tardy, heavy, and laborious peregrination ; an expedition attended from beginning to end by delay and disappointment, and marked altogether by such total absence of all manner of comfort, that not even the majestic presence of Ben Nevis and the adjacent scenery, could compensate the deficiency. Whatever, as a national work, be the demerits of the Caledonian canal, or the want of return hitherto received for the outlay, it cannot at any rate I think be denied, that it were a disgrace to England not to have completed by art a water communication so nearly carried through by an extensive chain of fresh water lakes, and huge mountains cloven by the hand of nature, from sea to sea. And I think, moreover, that this great work, whatever be the grounds whereon the northern circuitous passage in the case of vessels of adequate tonnage, has never been relinquished in favour of the inland navigation ; were it only with a view to the advantages of communication afforded thereby between the Highlands and their capital, will, after all, in the end, yield the public compensation. Wherefore it is consolatory to reflect, that although

a temporary monopoly of the steam navigation may inflict discomfiture on those persons who travel merely for the purposes of pleasure,—yet, from the very instances already cited of inconvenience and delay, the consequence of overloading the *Maid of Morven*,—is to be traced the unquestionable germ of future wealth and prosperity to the poor of the Highlands.

A great deal, in relating the troubles of life, may fortunately be expressed in few words ; which maxim I shall keep specially in view as I pass over categorically and succinctly the events of this and the succeeding day. The entire period from half-past five, when we set steam at Oban, till half-past eleven at night, was expended in heavily labouring along that arm of the sea called Linhe Loch, and which extends as far as Fitzwilliam. Even at the latter unseasonable hour the passengers were not permitted to go on shore, but, on the contrary, constrained to remain on board amid the hoisting and trundling barrels to and fro, besides other attendant nuisances of disembarkation. We then slowly moved to the commencement of the first artificial cut of the Caledonian canal, and entered the first lock of the great series called Neptune's Staircase. Here, at nearly one o'clock in the morning, all the passengers were turned out of the vessel to make the best of their way on foot, a mile and half along the towing path of the canal, to the place of the night's repose ; and since we were thirty or forty persons altogether, and the point of destination merely a small alehouse, incapable of providing beds for half the party, it followed that those who possessed long legs turned the same on the present occasion to special account. With

fair prospect of success, I would in former days have immediately started in the handicap, yet I derived equal satisfaction, perhaps, without the means of serving myself, in rendering a little assistance to others. I therefore attached my fortunes on the way to a married couple, travelling en suite with all their incumbrances, that is to say, two nursery maids, and four or five young children. Of these I carried one, a little creature of two years old, in my arms; a short period of time, and distance, one would think hardly worthy of being considered. Nevertheless, during the aforesaid space of a mile and a half, I found my right arm, from the want of usage in the office, ache most grievously. Meanwhile the infant, lost in the placid intensity of sleep, appeared to me to gain every five minutes successively a year's growth in weight.

Arrived at the inn, as might be anticipated, not a bed was to be had; the first comers being all served, none remained for the last. Nevertheless, though sleep be the unbought gift of heaven, I found means to purchase it on the present occasion; and by the aid of a fee properly applied, was introduced to a parlour below stairs, occupied by a party of whiskey bibbers, who by dint of drink, and tobacco, and spinning long yarns, were already nodding and prosy. In conformity with arrangements, they received notice to depart, and in a few minutes, I was alone in the room, extended at length on three chairs placed in a row, to rest for the night.

The Maid of Morven having performed progress through the remaining locks of Neptune's Staircase during the night, at half-past seven o'clock the next morning we were summoned to embark, thus to

commence the labours of another day. The extraordinary dimensions of this artificial cut, one hundred and twenty feet at the surface, fifty feet at the bottom, and twenty feet deep ; the banks moreover descending for the most part by a regular slope from the mountains, as of a natural river, display to the sight as a work of art, a magnificent spectacle ; yet the sluggish stillness of the water, and the insufficient steam-power of our vessel, retarded in a combined degree our toilsome progress. At a quarter before two we reached Fort Augustus, performing the distance twenty-nine miles in six hours and a quarter ; and here having five locks to pass, the period of delay was extended to an hour and a half. At half past three we started again, having now thirty-two more miles to go.

The paddles of the *Maid of Morven* now continued unceasingly to buffet these inland waters, till we arrived at that point on our way immediately opposite the celebrated Fall of Foyers. Here the steam was let off, and we lay to, according to established custom, in order to allow all those passengers inclined to avail themselves of the opportunity, to visit the waterfall. The favours of fortune on this inauspicious day, in every separate instance relating to the expedition, were sparingly bestowed. The identical cataract, that in other seasons, nourished to the plenitude of its strength by the winter's floods, and engendered amid the chaos of mist and foam, bounds like a raging lion from his den, now dribbled lazily through the inverted arch, its aperture, a mere garden cascade. Nevertheless, in our progress to and from the boat, notwithstanding our present disappointment arose from drought, we were doomed, during our walk, to

penance caused by stormy weather. A steady mizzling rain, had some time since set in, whereby as we passed through the thickets we unavoidably came in contact with large still drops of water as big as peas, wherewith the twigs of the bushes were heavily laden, and our shoes were thoroughly saturated by grass under foot, wet enough wherever we trod to drown a snipe.

At half-past ten o'clock at night, after accomplishing in the two succeeding days, taking the voyage from Oban throughout, twenty-three miles by the artificial canal, and thirty-seven miles by the natural lakes, we finally cast anchor one mile distant from the town of Inverness. Here, on every voyage, as the steamer proceeds no farther, she remains all night, and departs the next morning on her way to Glasgow, thus avoiding the labour and delay of passing the intervening locks between the resting place and Inverness.

A capacious omnibus was here awaiting our arrival to convey us to the end of our journey, into which carriage persons recklessly crowded to the imminent danger of it upsetting ; for since it was incapable of containing more than half the present party, personal safety, owing to the lateness of the hour, was sacrificed for the sake of expedition.

Having fortunately or unfortunately obtained an outside seat, among the first detachment, I am precluded from the necessity of relating the further adventures of the rest of the travellers, who remained pacing backwards and forwards on the towing-path of the canal, like ghosts on the banks of the Cocytus, till the return of the vehicle. But I may observe as relates to myself, on the present occasion, that not-

withstanding we arrived without the slightest accident at the point of our destination, and even before the Inverness clock struck eleven were received by the sleek rosy landlord of the Caledonian hotel, I never remember in any other wheel carriage, and within equally short space of time and distance, to have encountered more peril.

An infernal machine, it might really and truly be called; like Charon's leaky boat, groaning under surplusage of substantial perishable lumber, and like Charon's boat particularly, inasmuch as it was laden indiscriminately, in total disregard and disrespect of persons. Literally speaking, among auld wives, Highland swains of every degrec, wearers of the kelt and fillibeg, especially one ambulating performer on the bagpipes, or doodlesack as the instrument is provincially termed in this part of the country, no less than a royal personage, such is the uncertain will of fate, sat inside, crammed and squeezed promiscuously with all the rest, among the heterogeneous group. Prince Adalbert, brother to his majesty the king of Prussia, then travelling incognito in the guise of a private English gentleman, was among the passengers brought by the Maid of Morven from Glasgow to Oban, and submitted without murmur to all those miseries of peregrination, which, in the detail of the present voyage, I have laid before the reader. And I recall to mind with feelings of pleasure, that in numerous instances on the way, without knowledge of the prince's high rank and station, I witnessed his affability and benefited by his conversation. At the period I am relating, while sitting on the box of our ponderous and preponderating vehicle, whose weak springs were well nigh weighed down

by gravity and oscillation, and whose still weaker horses were driven helplessly scudding on their haunches down a steep descent; while I looked at our coachman, a small Scots boy, not exceeding in weight a good sized Norfolk turkey; and finally while I cast a glance on the prince's tall aide-de-camp, sitting in the middle between us, enveloped in an ample blue cloak, his mustachios curling towards the moon;—while I regarded all these sights, I say, and thought of difficulties and discomfitures from which not even royalty itself is free, my imagination for a moment wandered towards the many tinted allegorical picture of the ancients, that symbol of mortality and immortality, the stagnant lake,

“ *Scilicet omnibus
Enaviganda sive reges
Sine inopes erimus coloni.*”

Princes and farmers squeezed together, glide in
A “bus,” fit coach to t’other world to ride in.

CHAPTER X.

ISLAND OF GUERNSEY.

Landing at St. Peter's Port—Yacht Club Hotel—Inns in general—A Pair of Hostesses—A President of a Table d'Hôte—The Fish Market—The Shambles—Woodcocks—Wines, Fruits, and Flowers—Gardens—Frugality of the Inhabitants—Female Servants.

HAVING set apart a few days for the purpose of a visit to the island of Guernsey, I unfortunately, on the evening of a grievously bad night, departed on the voyage, leaving Southampton in the midst of rain and fog, at six o'clock p. m., after which it came on to blow hard; so that for the space of nearly fifteen hours the passengers of the rolling *Atalanta* were exposed to the infliction of a storm at sea. The most interesting object visible on our arrival was a huge placard, bearing the words “Yacht Club Hotel” inscribed on a board, affixed in the way of a sign to the side of a house, on an elevation not far distant from the water's edge, and which arrogated pre-eminence in favour of the principal inn in the town of St. Peter's Port. Thither, accordingly, at nine o'clock, on a bright, sunshiny summer's morning, we had no sooner landed on the quay than we bent our way.

I think I never happened to find myself among a less amiable looking set of companions than those apparitions newly risen, who, many now for the first time, encountered the light in disordered dress—a sort of hospital costume—and formed a deplorable pro-

cession. To the inn, accordingly, a crowd of passengers, extremely selfishly inclined, the weakly wailing, and the sturdy growling,—like a herd of unclean spirits, all repaired for consolation.

I was certainly at first sight disappointed by the appearance of an inn in Guernsey, where generally, it may be observed, an unseemly feeling of independence strikingly prevails among the proprietors; besides, the arrival of the packet from Southampton being the signal of departure of the same vessel immediately for Jersey, an extraordinary ebullition of contrary interests necessarily takes place among a mixed crowd of going and coming travellers. The *Atalanta* remained at the quay sufficient time only for exchange and preparation, all which business was effected in half an hour, during which period the Yacht Club Hotel was in a state of turmoil and confusion; each person kept a sharp eye on his own luggage; and in the meantime, while admittance to all the apartments was denied till the present occupants had abdicated their rights, the latter seemed without reason and vexatiously to maintain possession. The stranger, though deprived of actual comfort at an inn, has an unquestionable right to a comfortable welcome, and the landlord, with relation to his guest, certainly mistakes his position, so long as he arrogates in the exercise of his functions an authoritative demeanour. Civility, that costs nothing, gains him real respect, and meekness and benevolence are the groundwork of a host's vocation. The inns at St. Peter's Port are unquestionably bad; but it is an extraordinary fact, that the evil is actually engendered of liberality, arising out of universal hospitality, the characteristic of the inhabitants, who

invariably bestow abundant good cheer on the worthy and well-recommended, and allow a visitor, so soon as once received in their houses, marvellously few opportunities to visit an inn. For my part, I had the satisfaction of finding an early friend and acquaintance happily married in these regions, from whom and his brotherhood I received unbounded hospitality, regularly dining with one or other of his family every day in succession, and leaving in perspective many feasts untasted when I went away. For five days I tarried, and rambled about the island, universally gratified by sights of content, peace, and happiness within its shores, and edified by associating with a thrifty but generous people, enjoying under a genial climate, at cheap cost, and in high perfection, the luxuries of civilization.

Arrived at the Yacht Club Hotel, and previously to going abroad on a local excursion, a difficulty stood in my way at the first onset, on undertaking the process of installation, since a congregational system prevails at the inns, whereby the inmates of the house occupy generally double bedded rooms, and assemble daily at dinner at a two o'clock ordinary. I acceded to the latter arrangement, but strenuously objected to the former; wherefore, notwithstanding I yielded one point out of two, I committed an act of nonconformity in the eyes of two fair ladies, my hostesses, such as entailed upon me a little world of trouble before I was enabled to retrieve my position in their good graces.

These two personages, mother and daughter, might indeed, as well as good looking, both fairly be called young; for time had dealt mercifully with the former, and disappointments of a deli-

cate nature cast a shade of reflective gravity on the countenance of the latter. From a desire to preserve her own good humour, or merely perhaps for the sake of following a mother's example, at a very early period, it appeared, she had provided herself with a husband ; but unfortunately, since in leading a horse to the well consists not the secret of obliging him to drink, so, if report said true, the said husband, at the time I am speaking of, whatever may have been the domestic history in point, at any rate was not there ; in short, the young lady was said to be what is generally denominated a widow bewitched, and at this period, with her mother, both gaily dressed, both captivating, and, in point of appearance, readily to be mistaken for sisters, lived together in strict propriety, and jointly occupied the bar of the hotel.

Against the united force of these two ladies, each capable, by the power of her individual tongue, of sustaining the field against a host, and both determined to meet with fatal opposition my request of private apartments in their house, it was my arduous task to proceed, if indeed progress in argument be admitted to exist where one person remains passively silent, and listens to a torrent of eloquence from the opposite party. To negotiate with pretty women is always an extremely difficult matter, and especially when the subject happens to be in an opposite line of direction with their own interest ; volubility of tongue in such a case sustains the most questionable premises, and serves to bind tight a preposterous conclusion, no matter how many links be wanting of the chain of the reasoning. My fair antagonists, talking vehemently both together, had an invincible

fashion of relieving each other like the double acting tube of a bellows in an iron foundry, so that as soon as one became fairly exhausted, the other immediately took up the parole, and then she that stopped for want of breath merely paused for a few seconds to refit her curls, and began again. Having strenuously maintained that the Yacht Club Hotel was, and ought to be, a model for all other hotels in the known world, finally, in part relenting, they consigned me to out-lodgings at a milliner's hard by.

On this, my first day in Guernsey, I dined on the one solitary occasion at the table d'hôte. There were assembled a dozen persons or more, but of what grade or description, whether commercial travellers or residents, I cannot say; however, the president was a stranger, who having remained in the town many days, or weeks for aught I know, appeared either from predilection to dinner society, or an affinity to the juice of the grape in his nature, to have tumbled *par excellence*, very appropriately into the office. Of men, like horses in a meadow, always some one or other is disposed voluntarily to take the lead, and it may be confessed, on roads more rough, and paths more thorny, than the flowery, meandering track within the precincts of gentle Bacchus, most judiciously selected by the above individual. At all events a degree of sympathy of interest necessarily existed between the functionary and the landladies; for while a strong head and sound digestion enabled him to set a good example, the kindness of his looks induced others of his companions to swill as much wine as their skins would conveniently hold, or their purses pay for. His countenance, it is true, reflected none of his thoughts, even if

ever he had any, yet his was a broad, brown, happy face, and remarkably small and twinkling was his black eye. Though the party were chiefly young men inclined, for the most part, to yield their opinions and gastronomic tastes altogether to his guidance, not a word did he find it necessary to say in the course of his duty, nor ever detain the bottle for a moment in his grasp; an intelligent wink was usually sufficient to push it forward in its orbit; and even in extreme cases of inattention to the ceremony, a gentle elevation of the right elbow, or a nod to the left hand sidewise over his shoulder, never failed to produce the proper effect. Whenever he lifted to his mouth the glass, which he filled regularly to the brim at every solstice of the bottle, the rosy draught rolled over his projected under lip, down his throat in a continuous unbroken stream, swallowed apparently without the slightest muscular effort, while his russet cheeks beamed with reflected light, marking its progress like the sun's rays at setting, and indicating a genial warmth towards the centre of the system.

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The trouble of a voyage to St. Peter's Port is amply repaid, were it only to witness an epicurean spectacle on an enlarged scale, such as few provincial towns in the British dominions can boast; a sort of Elysium piscatorium, where the finny tribe on a hot summer's day, assorted in exuberant variety, on well-watered blocks of black polished marble, delight the senses of the *gourmand* with their cool, refreshing fragrance. Of course, I simply mean to allude to the fish-market.

Within a high, airy building, amply lighted by skylights in the roof, forty stalls, twenty on one side

and twenty on the other, supplied each by a pipe with pure cold water, are ranged in order. The slabs whercon the fish are laid are, I have said, of black marble; however, though such at first sight, when wetted, is the appearance, the material is rather grey, and identically the same whereof is composed the breakwater at Plymouth. The beneficence of the ocean as regards this important article of food and luxury, is really here extraordinary. On the present occasion, the various sorts exposed for sale created a sight such as I have seldom in my life witnessed, whereof the particulars, by no means uncommon, will serve to render a fair specimen of the supply on any ordinary day. In the first place, shining like silver, lay smelts, unusually large, with liberty to pick them at two-pence a dozen. Equally cheap in proportion were well grown turbot, and soles, double the ordinary size: add to these mullet both red and grey; cod and whiting, herrings and mackarel; john-dory and gurnet; rock-fish and bream; lobsters, crabs, and crawfish; plaice, brill, and sand-cels. Besides monsters of the deep, for which I really am unprovided with names; among others the huge conger, of which, by the way, the Guernsey people make very excellent soup, and here and there,

“ Horrens capillis ut marinus asperis
Echinus,”—

the sea hedge-hog.—All these I saw at one and the same time, for the most part flapping and floundering still alive, the produce of the labour of the small landed proprietors of the island, who, pursuing a double occupation, plough not only the land but the sea, while the

wife also thriftily turns time to good account, and appropriates her leisure hours to a trip to market.

Contiguous to the fish-market are the public shambles. All private slaughter-houses being by the municipal regulations strictly forbidden, the necessary nuisance is thus confined to one spot; neither is a single butcher's shop suffered to exist in the town. To the market consequently all the townspeople resort for the article of fresh meat; and every butcher is moreover held amenable to the public in peculiar regulations, being compelled by law to kill, cut up, and dress carcases for private individuals, at a prescribed rate, the same to be done in a workmanlike manner, on receiving twenty-four hours' notice. The artist is moreover obliged to take out a license previous to exercising his vocation, and liable to a certain penalty in every case of failure.

Good poultry is to be had in abundance, and at a reasonable rate. Of game, the produce of the island, there is little or none. Woodcocks, during flight-time at particular seasons of the year, appear in considerable numbers, and though their advent is altogether precarious, uniformly meet a warm reception; for no sooner is the arrival of a long beak made known in the island, than every sportsman, young or old, is on the alert, and a *posse comitatus* sally forth armed with every sort of implement of death, from a militia musket to a horse pistol; neither do they return to their homes sated with destruction till the last bird of the persecuted squadron has winged its departure.

The climate of Guernsey cherishes with the highest degree of congeniality, wines, fruit, and flowers. The former, in mellowness and flavour, far exceed

those usually met with in England, and as to the port in particular, I was strongly reminded of the beverage I have tasted heretofore on the banks of the Douro, soft, smooth and oily, and enriched with a smack of Burgundy. I need hardly remark on the difference between the pure liquor drawn from the butt, and the same compounded with agoa ardente for the London market ; so that I draw a comparison between the former, and wine that is to be had in Guernsey.

The fruit spread, even on ordinary occasions, on the hospitable board after dinner, is here sufficient both in quantity and quality to astonish a new comer. Peaches, nectarines, apricots, grapes, apples, pears, and among these the magnificent chaumontel, are devoured as a matter of ordinary habit, in such profusion, that one's thoughts necessarily revert to those happy days of boyhood, when of apples, the contents of a hat was no immoderate measure of an every day appetite, when one ate fruit the better part of a morning against time with utter impunity, and after being fairly clogged up, so long as the weary teeth were refreshed by a bite of gingerbread, began again. In short, a sumptuous dessert such as is provided in England only in great houses and on great occasions, is seen in Guernsey almost every day, and people usually eat five or six large peaches; instead of one.

The brilliancy of flowers during the summer months here, where every plant displays extraordinary vigour, is particularly remarkable to an English eye, and their cultivation offers untold hours of delight to the horticulturist. Surely the pleasures of a flower-garden are among the rational resources of an elegant mind, whereby not only are the senses continually

gratified, by parterres blazing in all the fragrant splendour of nature, but interesting communion is held with vegetative life, the most simple and most early source of human enjoyment. The gardens of Guernsey form a striking feature in the prospect as seen from a ship at sea, when arriving at the island; and the abundance of glass, reflecting the sun's rays from the roofs of the green-houses scattered among the high clean looking white houses one above another, on ground rising immediately from the sea-shore, exceeds ordinary proportion. Of the aforesaid space, since the old town with narrow streets is small, by far the most extensive portion is covered with suburbs; wherein comfort and independence as to the disposition of the dwellings has been consulted to an eminent degree. Every house, although within the precincts of a town, has the advantages of a rural abode; and whatever be the extent of the premises, is enclosed by a garden-wall, that renders it an isolated domain. These garden-walls, relieved by green trees here and there, bound the way on either side, forming lanes, or passages, or thoroughfares, whatever may be the denomination, which serve as streets, and afford the principal means of communication through this portion of the neighbourhood.

Domestic comfort, as relates to internal arrangements, is no where than on this soil better understood, and the dimensions of the island are at the same time so limited, as to render farther considerations almost unnecessary. Profuse expense is actually dis-countenanced by the manners of the people, and the example of frugality is attended with still better effect than in large communities. Even horses and

carriages on a spot where short distances only are to be traversed, where idleness is at a discount, and where daily loiterers become tired of seeing each others' faces on the promenade, gradually sink into disrepute, and are less cared for. Of close carriages, at least in use, there are I believe none in Guernsey, nor even of four-wheeled one-horse vehicles, more than half a dozen kept for private purposes. Thus the circulation of expense, in every establishment passes slow through the extremities, and tends in increased force to the vital organ of the household. One particular deviation from general custom is conspicuous in Guernsey. In by far the greater portion of houses, whether great or small, whether on especial or common occasions, the duties of the table are chiefly served by women ; that is to say, although men-servants are occasionally employed, the employment of women in the offices of house steward, *maitre d'hotel*, butler, or lacquey, sanctioned by universal custom, is not considered incompatible, as it would be with us, with the other branches of a first rate establishment. Even of the highest families of Guernsey, the *menage* compared with England is limited ; equal perhaps in general appearance of house, furniture, plate, pictures, and bijouterie to that of an individual possessing three or four thousand a-year. As on gala days among the heathen gods, the cup-bearer was a female, so as far as I can perceive the services of women are not in anywise derogatory to good taste or domestic splendour. Certainly the duty of waiting at table can be no where better performed than by the clever, quick, active, lynx-eyed females in Guernsey, where sacrifice, if made at all, is offered at the shrine of comfort,

to the discomfiture of the competitive spirit whereby, in England, men like sheep that jump at sticks and straws, put themselves to unnecessary pains in matters of trivial moment, and disregard difficulty or peril so long as they can follow one another.

CHAPTER XI.

Environs of St. Peter's Port—Farm-houses—Aspect of the Country—Varech—Regulations relating to the gathering thereof—Roads—Bridle path round the Island—The Cliffs—Flat Shores at the Northern extremity—Land reclaimed from the Sea—Naturalization of Sea Fish to fresh Water.

COMFORT is no less remarkable in the interior of the island than among the inhabitants of the town. Since the dimensions are not more than eleven miles in length, and from three to six in breadth, the distance to be traversed in a straight line in any direction is necessarily inconsiderable; but no matter to what point of the opposite coast the traveller from St. Peter's Port may choose to bend his way, comfort everywhere prevails, and on both sides of the road appear well-fashioned solid and respectable country dwellings. The suburbs, expanding in the environs, blend gradually with the rural domains; the numerous ornamental villas at the extremity yielding, by such imperceptible degrees, to the substantial farm-house, that it is really difficult to determine the exact point where one has fairly taken leave of the town. Every farm-house, encompassed by a good garden, farm-yard, and orchard, and surrounded by shrubs, such as the hydrangia, arbutus, scarlet fuchsia, and myrtle, which here flourish in the open air, is a piece of solid stone masonry, defended from the rain by a coping of tile that overhangs the eaves. The antiquity of the furniture within, no less than the substantial appearance of things without, bears indisputable testimony on the part of the occupier to long

undisturbed possession. In the few houses I happened to enter here and there, the goods and chattels appeared universally the same, consisting of chairs and tables of black glossy oak, books whose covers from age might be supposed of the same material, military caps, musquets, and other things emblematical of militia service, and above all, a never failing store of hams and bacon ranged on a rack attached to the ceiling. One particular implement peculiar to the island is to be found in every cottage,—a homely description of sofa or pallet, covered with clean oaten straw or pea-hawm, whereon the elder members of the family refit their crazy joints during the day, and the younger occasionally perhaps, under particular circumstances only, are wont to repose. The legs of this simple piece of furniture are generally made fast in the floor, and since it is seldom if ever dispensed with even in the most humble dwellings, it cannot but appear to those inclined to draw invidious comparisons, that while our own clowns in the alehouses, are subject to the grievance of snoring at full length on hard oaken benches, the Guernsey peasant reclines at his ease like a man of fashion.

A high mound of earth surmounted by a strong furze hedge, is the usual fence of the country, wherefore the premises of a Guernsey farmer are as impregnably fortified and secluded, as if he were the owner of an estate and farm surrounded by a high stone wall. The lover of the picturesque during an inland walk is doomed to considerable disappointment; and as he wanders along restricted in the view on either side, as if within a Devonshire green lane, the extreme flatness of the country precludes

him as he proceeds from all future chance of variety; for not a single elevated spot worthy of the name of a hill exists within the compass of the island. Now and then at rare intervals, on arriving at a gate, another perhaps happens to be so placed in a straight line beyond at the opposite end of the field, that the prospect thus partially becomes a little extended, and here probably he will observe occasional deviations from our agricultural practice. Cows, for instance, instead of roaming at large, are tethered in the meadows, and parsneps in great abundance are cultivated as an ordinary crop. Sea-weed called "varech" is used as a manure, and gathered under municipal regulations; indeed, so violent is the scramble between the contending parties, that peace officers are summoned at the harvest or gathering. A day twice in each year is set apart for this ceremony, when neighbour against neighbour, in brute strength and rivalry, contend fiercely for this tribute of the ocean. Persons of all ages, of different denominations and sexes, wives, maids, and widows, married men, and bachelors, leave and license by the proper authorities being given, may be seen striving together indiscriminately in the fury of competition, and, each anxious to possess him or herself of more varech than the other, if not absolutely quarrelling and fighting, at least tousling and tumbling one another up to their middles in water.

Trees of considerable size, on either side of the way, grow in the cross roads and lanes; whereby the general aspect of the country is improved, and many secluded spots and nooks embellished to such a degree, that the painter requiring a model for his art, might here select many a sweet specimen of rural

abode. The larger roads were also formerly planted, and the timber had attained a goodly stature, but immediately that the system of Macadam was introduced in the island, the same were in consequence cut down for the sake of ventilation.

A bridle-path close to the edge of the cliffs extends the whole circumference of the island, and as the cliffs are lofty, the land, though extraordinarily flat, is sufficiently elevated above the level of the sea. Mounted on an active pony, enjoying sunshine and leisure, whether gazing seaward from the verge of the precipice, gaily cantering along over the flat, green sward, or putting the animal's powers to the test by scrambling through nearly impervious ravines, here at all events may be found, by one inclined to wander, an agreeable mode of passing a summer's day. Proceeding by the winding track from point to point, from one craggy promontory to its neighbouring brother, the vicissitudes of marine scenery succeed in fantastic variety, while many projecting angles attract a still deeper interest, as spots whereon the remains are yet visible of ancient forts and batteries. Reefs of rocks, huge and rugged, here and there below, protrude above the surface of the ocean, rocks of pure granite, the primary formation of the island, which, exposed to an impetuous surf for succeeding ages, have become hollow and jagged with age, perforated through and through with cracks and fissures. From an elevated spot it is beautiful to observe these rugged masses on a calm still day occasionally entirely hidden under the glassy surface of the continually bounding sea, and then again protruding in blank nakedness as the ground swell recedes. Now the light green wave dashes against their base, and the

heaving waters cover the highest summit, again they descend in a hissing, streaming, milky torrent, while soft, feathery, frothy spray floats in detached portions in the air.

Although such is for the most part the description of coast of the Island of Guernsey, the shores at the northern extremity are particularly low; so much so that until a late period, a considerable portion of the country lay under water. On this spot may be seen the result of an interesting experiment whereby the late Sir John Doyle successfully reclaimed from the inroads of the sea, a portion of land previously overflowed equal to upwards of six hundred statute acres, all which territory at the present time lies under cultivation. Few instances exist of an equally important operation performed at so little trouble and cost, for the mound of earth thrown up for the purpose was judiciously placed, and the natural accumulations of sand and shingle, still continue to render the work day after day more impregnable.

A landed proprietor on the spot has taken advantage of localities in general, by maintaining a communication between the said reclaimed land and the ocean, to turn to account an experiment connected with natural history. By means of an open water-course passing from a small lake within, through the mound or sea-wall into the sea, and a strong iron-grating on the inside, contrived to admit the ingress and egress of the tide, and to confine fish of moderate size within the lake, several sorts of salt-water fish have been by degrees subjected to the inundation of fresh water. Scientific people have faith in the result; and certainly here sea-fish have lived and thriven for weeks in succession, the sea being totally

excluded by the sluice-gate, and the salt water sufficiently diluted by fresh streams, to induce cattle to drink it without hesitation.

Being introduced by a friend to the owner of the lake, the latter kindly ordered a couple of men to haul a drag net across to gratify my curiosity, the water at the same time being so fresh as to be merely brackish. The wind unfortunately was so unusually high that the haul was unsuccessful ; the net moreover was lightly shotted and the fish leaped clean over it into the water, wherefore, though I saw many, owing to being thus disturbed, about half a dozen grey mullet only were brought on shore. From their size and condition, since they had lived here some weeks, one might fairly conclude, that their nature, if not at first congenial, was reconciled to the fresh pasture ; and I had a further opportunity with reference to the same fact of adding a word as to their firmness and flavour, having eaten of them the same day, and found them excellent at dinner. Besides the mullet aforesaid, turbot, plaice, and smelts, were denizens of the same domain, all in equally prosperous case and healthy. Serious devastation, the proprietor informed me, was occasionally committed by fresh water eels, that large and ferocious, allured by exclusive society, and finding their way nobody knew how into the assembly, set to work on their arrival without favour or ceremony, and devoured natives and foreigners together.

What a field of watery speculation would at once be thrown open, were it ever deemed possible, as in the instance above stated, though on a more extended scale, thus to subject sea-fish to amphibious usage ; and by the assistance of art or scientific persuasion,

to control their exuberant fecundity. The salmon and the eel, pioneers of two distinct tribes, the scaled and unscaled, in accordance with their nature at certain seasons of the year or otherwise, leave the sea to inhabit fresh rivers, which fact perhaps argues capabilities of organization with reference to the whole species, which, if put to the test, might be farther extended. At any rate the subject creates amusing speculation, with reference to making our lakes and rivers receptacles for bringing the nations that inhabit the world of waters into converse with each other, and naturalizing of the animal kingdom almost the only creatures not yet domesticated by the hand of man. Thus cod and haddock may eventually learn to live in placid brotherhood with perch and roach, and the wild salmon rub his silver sides in amity upon the copper-coloured carp. In many parts of England pure salt water reservoirs are already employed with advantage, but none that I know of have yet effectually superseded the tanks of the London fishmonger. Yet on many spots on the coast reservoirs might be contrived of enormous dimensions, capable, whether supplied by wind, water, or steam, with sea water, of containing fish in almost unlimited numbers. It is extraordinary that, while every individual in the kingdom is more or less interested in the distribution of this boon of bountiful nature, fishmongers, almost without remonstrance, have maintained absolute and continued monopoly, neither do the inquisitive or discontented trouble themselves to know those details of combination, whereby an uncertain supply is subjugated to certain demand, and large quantities of fish abstracted and perhaps destroyed, to prevent a glut in the market.

CHAPTER XII.

Laws relating to the Descent of Property—Registration of Estates—Formalities relating thereto—Curious Documents in the Greffier's Office—The Elizabeth College—Course of Instruction—An Infant School.

SINCE the ancient laws of Normandy relating to the descent of property, obtain in the island of Guernsey, whereby land descends among heirs male in a species of gavelkind, the whole country is consequently divided into small proprietorships; and the French language, though gradually giving way to the English tongue among the inhabitants, is still maintained in the proceedings of the courts of law. Few people, especially those residing in the country, are found wealthy, and where difference exists in possessions, it is in English and other funded securities.

The tenures of estates, here minutely subdivided, are divested of the ordinary bewilderment attendant upon English landed property by a system of registration that has obtained for centuries, whereby the Guernsey man, freed from the intricacies of title-deeds, to say nothing of copyhold property and manorial rights, is enabled by a summary process, combining security with simplicity, to effect the transfer of an estate for a sum of money in ordinary cases not exceeding from three to five pounds. The said process, from enquiries I made on the spot, appears to be as follows.

The terms of purchase of an estate are no sooner

agreed upon between the parties, than the buyer has recourse to the office of the greffier, or general registrar of the royal court of the island; the latter consisting of the bailiff or chief magistrate and twelve jurats. The said greffier, by virtue of his vocation, draws up and enters into the books of register all acts, orders, judgments, and sentences, preserving the records thereunto belonging; likewise all bargains, mortgages, and sales of lands and rents; delivering copies under his signature to whomsoever required. In conformity with the above regulation, at the charge of one shilling, the registry of the estate in question is produced for inspection, which registry lays open and declares all manner of particulars relative to mortgages, or in any way connected therewith; and thus ample insight is at once had by the interested party, since no unregistered transaction is legal or valid. The seller of the estate next produces his mortgage book wherein are entered the acquittances for the interest paid on the mortgages, and the buyer being satisfied on this head, the contract between the parties is immediately drawn up. With this document, usually comprised within the compass of an ordinary sheet of paper, both buyer and seller, together with the wife of the latter if he be married, for according to the law of the land she must be a party to the bargain, appear in the presence of the bailiff and two jurats. These three functionaries now affix their signatures to the contract, which is then accordingly registered in the said greffier's office, and both buyer and seller are provided with copies, bearing distinct reference to the page and folio. An amicable action at law is lastly commenced, for the purpose, by a legal pro-

ceeding, of dispossessing the seller, and affording a fuller confirmation of the registered transaction by publicity ; the sentence of the court thence becoming an award of appropriation of the property that rivets the bargain for ever and ever.

The royal court representing “ the States of the island,” by which appellative the civil authorities of Guernsey are distinguished, composed, as before stated, of the bailiff, or chief magistrate, and twelve jurats chosen for life, sits at St. Peter’s Port at frequent intervals during term time, and occasionally at sundry periods throughout the whole year. Three or four jurats together with the bailiff are sufficient to form a court, wherein the solemnity of an oath is restricted to merely holding up the hand ; the pleadings are conducted by attorneys in the French language, and the officers of the court are plainly dressed, bailiff, jurats, and attorneys, neither wearing wig nor gown.

There are many curious documents in the greffier’s office, of ancient date, and in a state of high preservation ; among those that I saw were sundry charters of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Elizabeth. The most interesting of all, however, is the journal or day-book of the criminal court immediately subsequent to the period of the reformation. Herein may be read at the present day, legibly written as on the hour the ink flowed from the pen, the names and sentences of martyrs who then perished at the stake. Among the latter entries, is that of the condemnation to death by fire of the unfortunate female, celebrated in history for having given birth to an infant in the midst of the flames. * * *

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Notwithstanding the privileges of the Elizabeth

College are in some measure restricted to the sons of natives of the island, many boys are sent continually from England to receive their education at this academical establishment and return home once a year to remain during the midsummer vacation. One of the under-masters on these occasions escorts the juvenile detachment across the sea, landing either at the ports of Southampton, Plymouth, or Weymouth, from the two former of which, packets ply twice a week during the summer,—from the latter, at similar periods all the year round.

The Elizabeth College, founded originally by Queen Elizabeth, was subsequently at the application of the States of the island re-chartered by his late Majesty King George the Fourth. From the cursory view I was enabled to obtain of the establishment, I have reason to entertain a high opinion of its merits, and it has in fact been the means, as affording cheap and excellent education, of inducing many persons with large families, for the sake of obtaining the advantages attendant upon residence, to settle for an extended period on the island. For the sons of persons resident, the college dues amount to no more than twelve pounds a year, for which small sum they receive all the advantages of tuition, boarding at the same time with their parents. The English boarders before alluded to, are received at the house of the principal at a stipend of sixty pounds a year, which includes everything.

Every description of student, without distinction of privilege, is admissible to the institution, excepting as regards the exhibitions annually competed for, two or three of which are restricted exclusively to sons of natives of the island. The rest are attainable

by general scholars, who also derive other objects of emulation in the distribution of medals and prizes. A public examination, immediately after the mid-summer vacation, takes place every year, which ceremony is conducted by two masters of arts of the University of Oxford, specially elected by the heads of Exeter, Jesus, and Pembroke colleges.

So far as I could learn, boys are qualified for both our universities according to the course of study adopted at Eton and Westminster, and a better system of instruction at the same time is introduced, whereby the attention of the student, as occasion may require, is either directed even exclusively to the Latin and Greek classics, or in like manner even exclusively to other branches of useful knowledge. As is usual in most other schools, the day is divided into three periods of study, and during all these periods the attendance of three professors is regular and unintermitting. One professor attends to the Latin and Greek classics, another to arithmetic and mathematics, and the third to the modern languages; so that an opportunity is afforded to the student of directing his attention, *ad libitum*, either to one or all these branches of study accordingly as his parents may think fit, or the bent of his own mind incline.

To my old Guernsey friend, I was indebted for an introduction to the principal, from whom, in a few minutes' conversation, I gathered the above particulars; he would kindly have furnished me with more information, but I was unwilling further to intrude on the leisure of one who had so little of leisure to spare.

We afterwards strolled together about the town;

having then no particular object in view ; however my friend suddenly turned briskly round, and asked me whether I would like to see the interior of an infant school. I acceded immediately to the proposal, and to the establishment we at once repaired ; wherefore we saw things divested of a holiday garb, and as they exist every day.

Though the superintendents, a man and his wife, upon whom devolves the care and tuition of at least fifty or sixty small scholars, were by no means in expectation of receiving visitors, we were freely admitted to a clean and airy school-room, in form oblong, in size sufficiently large, and furnished at the farther end with several rows of ordinary wooden steps, falling towards the centre of the room, so as to serve as seats or benches for the little pupils to sit upon, one row above another.

The children were at this time in their play-ground, and almost so soon as we arrived, a little bell rang to summon them to their labour, when it were well if those persons averse to the system of infantine discipline had observed the alacrity wherewith, converting toil to pleasure, and eagerly anticipating a feast of the mind as if it were one of the body, this Lilliputian multitude rushed tottering and tumbling in upon the heels of one another. On they came, some, but few, six or seven years of age ; by far the greater number between two and three : old men in miniature, waddling and protuberant, unsteady and straddling, and exhibiting in their own little persons a pathetic analogy between old age and infancy. Even those of declining years and strength might here draw a pleasing moral from a picture thus instructive, and learn, in the anticipation of coming

infirmity—that the sprightly impulses of youth exist and are ever compatible with the feebleness of age. However, as I said before, on they came, making their way across the schoolroom with the haste of firemen to a conflagration, each, for its own part, as happy, I really believe, as any earthly being whatever is permitted to be. Its energies aroused—its bodily strength called into action—hustled by its equals, and animated by mutual contention—each individual child here stood forth to vindicate its own privileges, and to buffet the world, mind and muscle, entirely on its own resources. If overset in its course by one, it was immediately picked up by another, and the tear removed from its eye by a third, as it hung smiling on the skirts of a fourth; and altogether they clambered over, and rolled upon their stomachs among the benches at the top of the room, to the discomposure of garments, and exposure of infantine limbs and proportions, till, partly by their own exertions, and partly by the assistance of one another, they all speedily became arranged, seated in order, attentive, and expectant—some half dozen rows of partly serious, partly smiling faces.

The business of the school, now about to commence, was evidently an object of interest to the young assembly, for all eyes were simultaneously directed towards the pupil selected by the superintendent to perform the lesson. Out of compliment, perhaps, to the visitors, the biggest boy of all, and there was hardly another like him, was selected on the present occasion to take the book in his hand. Nearly eight years of age, and towering above the rest in stature, a leviathan amid little fishes, he held elevated

before his eyes, not a book but a board, whereon on one side was pasted a collection of sentences from the New Testament, and on the other a series of proper answers to be given by the respondents. In an audible voice he then read the first sentence, when all, big and little, every child in the school-room, responded thereto by acclamation according to the written answer, taking the cue from the superintendent. The least infants of all, even those unable to articulate intelligibly, were not less ready to add their endeavours to swell the volume of sound ; and since children delight in noise, so their taste was here gratified and turned to good account, by the privilege at each answer of clapping hands. This ceremony, whether well or ill done, was performed at all events with wonderful glee ; and though some little creatures clumsily failed to make their small hands meet, they clapped a pair of fat arms together, which did quite as well, serving to mark the time and arouse the attention. In the mean time, the whole assemblage, with the exception of the reading boy, who stood up, kept their seats on the benches as before.

One other member of the community I have omitted to mention, a small dog—a long-backed, yellow turnspit, out at elbows, with large, round, expressive eyes, that sat on the benches, side by side with the children, joint property apparently of all, had received no doubt an accomplished nursery education, and was perfectly versed in the ways of his young associates. Caressed first by one, then by another, and treated by all just as one of themselves, a mutual understanding was founded on such amicable principles between the parties, that really adult instinct and infantine reason were placed in ludicrous con-

trast, and brought nearly to a level. Liberties, however, restricted by canine regulations, were allowed just so far and no farther, the dog himself determining the limit, according to circumstances or the caprice of temper ; on particular occasions suffering himself to be dragged about by the tail, without making the least remonstrance ; sometimes, on far less provocation, by a wrinkle in the upper lip, shewing signs of serious displeasure, but almost always, if disturbed when rolled up round comfortably in a ball, uttering a tremendous growl.

At the sound of clapping of hands, the faithful quadruped reared himself on his tiny haunches, and looked woful and wistfully at the ceiling ; for good manners alone restrained a sympathetic effusion : most willingly indeed had he barked, if he dared, preserving silence entirely by aid of the moral sense, or force of discipline, in spite of the vile nature that was evidently struggling within him, to a degree that caused every minute fibre, and responsive muscle in his body, to writhe as if he were galvanized.

It were well to discover, either in the way of knowledge borrowed of the learned, or experience furnished by the owners of children, the exact point when incipient infant reason ought properly, and without undue severity, to be coerced by gentle discipline ; and since among other establishments that the age has produced, infant schools offer a clue to this investigation, it really did occur to me, after viewing the spectacle already described, that a modified system of instruction on the same plan might be farther extended. Such, at any rate, is the rapid growth in a child of mental perception, and such the early development of passion, that in a few

short days the puling, tremulous cry, becomes a loud angry scream, which the small newborn animal systematically now converts to useful worldly purposes and ends. Not more certainly does the Swiss peasant, when he blows his horn, know his cow will come and be milked, than the froward, querulous baby, merely by using the means within its own power, succeed in obtaining its desire, and learn, before three weeks old, to bend a whole household to its will. Whether or not, according to the present nursery system of education, this humour be not encouraged too far, is a question for those more versed in the subject than myself to consider; and at least whether, as is the case with the children of the poor, who either at infant schools or at their own homes, experience a wholesome degree of restraint by freely associating together, a similar privilege might not be extended with equal advantage to the offspring of the rich, whose doom at present, gregarious creatures though they be, is to pass months in infancy without the companionship of their equals, and subject, under the dominion of an aged nurse perhaps, to almost absolute solitude.

CHAPTER XIII.

IRELAND.

An Interruption—An Irish Crowd—A cheap Evening's Entertainment—The poor Equestrians.

IT was a remarkably fine, clear summer's evening, when, after a rather uncomfortable journey, I stood quietly gazing over the parapet of the bridge of Athlone. As I looked downwards upon the Shannon, the broad surface of that noble river was here and there smooth as a mirror, or occasionally fretted as the stream bubbled in contact with those abrupt angular points that restrain its course, and compel it to meander through a variegated series of rich pastures. The cows stood still in the meadows; the air was filled with glittering insects; the swallows dipped gracefully in the water in chase of their small winged prey, which sometimes the heavy splashing trout would rescue from their grasp; and nature all around, cheered by the more genial rays of the sun on his decline, exuberantly teemed with animal and vegetative life, till I became in such a degree absorbed by the prospect before me, that I might just as well have been in perfect solitude, as far as regards a crowd of country people, whom now I perceived making their way across the said bridge into the town.

When I say I perceived, it were more correct to express myself, I was made to observe, for my atten-

tion was roused from meditation or reverie by a coarse hard punch of a fist or an elbow in the side, that destroyed my equilibrium, and completely forced me suddenly from my position. The words, "by your lave," in the meantime sounded an apology in my ears. To be startled is always annoying; self-accusation immediately succeeds on yielding to an impulse of fear, and the act of an inconsiderate stranger, who unnecessarily demolishes the web of one's thought, offends still more;—though the whole fabric cost nothing in weaving, and when finished be worth nothing after all, yet, during manufacture, the toil is a pleasure, and the thread, like the severed ends of a gossamer line, is gone for ever.

I had no sooner, roused and somewhat irritated by the salutation, turned round in a hurry, than my wrath quickly subsided at the greeting of the honest, good-natured smile of a fat, healthy woman, who, oppressed by the weight of a heavy child, and herself in a violent perspiration, had merely possessed herself of an elevated resting-place whereon to place her foot against the balustrades of the bridge. Hastily drawing her fore-arm across to wipe her forehead, and resting the infant upon a knee highly raised against the balustrade, she had already commenced her object in view by extracting several pins, and making very necessary arrangements relating to the little creature's clothes, for the purpose of setting to rights sundry small matters that had gone wrong. A poor woman with a baby is really an object of compassion, for the service is one of perpetual slavery; the source of her pain, the alloy of her pleasure, a tormenting burden by day and by night,—she bears about with her wherever she goes

a foward brat perhaps, that tardily, if at all, requites a mother's care and affection. I would certainly have rendered this woman assistance, but the office was positively so extremely disagreeable, that I was on a sudden constrained to turn round and walk away.

“By your lave,” is an expression at once significant and urgent—a form of periphrasis for the purposes of its application, in despite of the philologist, difficult to be improved: in fact, it conveys a proposition, and at the same time concedes the right of election; that is to say, it offers an individual a distinct choice, either to bundle immediately out of the way, or stand still and be knocked down on the same spot like a ninepin. In an Irish crowd, physical force speedily overcomes moral gravity; at least the philosopher inclined to ruminate, must needs at the same time be peripatetic, for, so sure as the words “by your lave” are uttered, do what he will, in spite of all his efforts to retain his position, on he must go, with reason, moreover, to consider himself remarkably fortunate, provided he happens to know whither he is going. Such in fact was precisely my case, though I do not mean to say I am a philosopher; but I had fallen in with a crowd of people, all going the same way, myself among the rest, without being in anywise informed as to the whence, whither, and wherefore. Anything to an Irishman is a party of pleasure, whether the wedding or the funeral of a neighbour, although the present concourse, amongst whom time was in inverse proportion to their small plots of potatoes, had left their houses on a special occasion. A band of strolling equestrians, lately arrived at Athlone, were on the

present evening to afford the public an exhibition, of which fact being apprised by one of the throng, I readily made up my mind to be a spectator with the rest.

The spot chosen for the hippodrome was the butchers' shambles, whither we all straightway repaired en masse ; and here, since a pallisadoed fence, and a door confined by a strong wooden bar had been previously arranged for the express purpose of keeping people out, we were accordingly all detained a considerable time at the outside without being able to get in ; whereat the boys grew restless and obstreperous, discomposing the women's dress as they unceasingly shifted their position. No sooner, however, had the town clock struck the appointed hour, than the said formidable bar being removed, we all rushed in.

An elegant young woman, attired in a neat plain dress of white muslin, was here seated to receive the entrance-money ; beside her stood a young man in the costume of clown, his face painted in alternate streaks of red and white, as is usual at our theatres ; and so soon as each candidate for the spectacle had liquidated his fee of admittance, the latter of these two persons lifted a low bar, whereon he kept his hand, and accordingly let him in. These two young people it appeared were sole proprietors, door-keepers, and performers, having no other human being whatever to assist them ; neither were any placards published or bills issued relating to the entertainment, so that I was a little surprised, and indeed somewhat amused, to find, as I approached the said bar, that the price of admission was only one penny. Somehow or other the silly conceit for

the moment struck me, of receiving a whole evening's entertainment at the small charge of a penny; and yielding thereto carelessly, I advanced onwards in my place, and paid no more nor less—just a penny. A melancholy glance of the poor young woman's dark eyes seemed to cast a look of reproach upon me as I paid the penny, whereof I felt the reproof; and driven forwards by the crowd, was uncomfortably chagrined, and sorry thus to have trifled with human sorrows, and stingily, as it were, contributed not a jot more than the most ragged of the spectators around me, when a piece of silver might have afforded relief and consolation to the truly indigent. But the present area was not, in point of fact, a spot wherein to indulge in sober reflection, for since there was no sort of distinction, whether box, pit, or gallery, every one had enough to do to choose a position for himself, and afterwards defend and maintain it. A circle for the performers, covered with saw-dust in the usual manner, was prepared in the middle: immediately behind the circle two rows of people were seated on the ground, and in the rear of these stood the rest of the assemblage, which latter composed by far the greater portion, and the most noisy. In a few minutes way was made for the performers, who entered the arena, and the exhibition began.

The first act of the drama was performed by the young man before mentioned, who, without assistance or human coadjutor of any description whatever, led forward by the bridle within the circle, a well proportioned piebald horse, caparisoned with broad padded saddle, bearing rein and surcingle. Having

arrived in the middle, and bowed to the spectators, without a moment's delay he sprang as nimble as a bird on the animal's back, starting off immediately in a brisk canter, and fearlessly increasing the pace by a few sharp strokes of the whip on his withers. An universal shout burst forth among the crowd, as the rider still urged the beast upon his mettle, till, revolving with awful velocity, leaning inwards towards the earth, man and horse seemed wholly supported by the centrifugal motion ; and the saw-dust from the heels of the latter filled, or half filled, the open mouth of many a gaping spectator. The human form never appears to greater advantage than when thus contending against so many, so various and differently directed motions, it successfully maintains a graceful equilibrium ; and since the performer was an adept in his vocation, and entire novelty added to the effect at present of the spectacle, the impression consequently created was such, that boys, men, and women literally screamed with delight as the piebald horse gallantly persevered in his orbit, and the equestrian, in figure a pattern for the sculptor's chisel, continued to perform feats calculated to the very highest pitch to arouse their understandings. Now he was off, running by the side of the steed ; again, with one hand on the withers, he sprang on the saddle, standing erect during topmost career, or, on pointed toe, poised firmly, in attitude a flying Mercury. Leaping over the whip, again through the hoop, he performed in turn all those specimens of agility that are by far too common to need remark, were it not to contrast with minds rejoicing in freshness, and drinking deep in the cup

of novelty. Exhausted by a hearty course, the performer at last suddenly leaped on the ground, when the piebald horse, obediently dropping his head, followed to the centre of the circle, gave himself a violent shake, and, rubbing his forehead forcibly against his master's bosom, received caresses from many an admiring spectator. Turbulence had now utterly perished in the midst of the general satisfaction testified in all quarters to the praise of both horse and rider, and congratulations were accordingly delivered with native warmth of heart and forcible expression.

The exhibition had already, one would have imagined, far exceeded in quantity and quality the amount reasonably to be expected at the charge of only one penny, when another act of the performance was immediately announced to follow. Again the piebald horse, wind and vigour refreshed, made his appearance in the arena. The young woman now, with a peculiar air of timidity, preparing in turn to contribute to the entertainment; was with difficulty assisted by her husband on the back of her piebald palfrey, gathered the reins like a novice in her hand, reared herself unsteadily on her feet, and set forward round the circle in an extremely gentle canter. It was at once evident, from her pale cheek, cowering attitude, and terrified countenance, that she was a totally unpractised performer, and accordingly, in the course of a couple of minutes, crouching still lower and lower, though the young man kept assiduously running at her side, nature totally gave way. She was again on the ground, and the effort confessedly a failure.

I bade adieu to the performance, and went home to

my inn, leaving the fainting woman, her black hair broken loose, surrounded by an eager crowd of her own sex, who, partly from true kindness of nature, and partly from curiosity to know precisely what was the matter, hardly allowed the sufferer room to breathe among the cluster. As I lay down to rest, tormented by the scene I had witnessed, my ears, filled with the plaintive tone of the young woman's voice, rang monotonously with the sound of "one penny;"—a copper spectre, as it were, that caused me to resolve, but the resolution was broken on the morrow;—and when on the third day I did, as I determined, actually visit the abode of the poor equestrians, they had packed up their all, and were gone.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Preparations for Departure—Mail Coach Guard—Starting of a Mail Coach—Energy of Coachman—A Mail Guardsman—Rumination—Wonderful Effect of the Horn—Merit self-rewarded—An Exotic Refreshment—A Roadside Inn—A rural Hebe—A thrifty Precaution—A Flirtation—Light Hearts and Thin Breeches—Ringing a Pig—Happy Slumbers—The poor Equestrians.

A COUPLE of days, I think, after the event related in the last brief chapter, I left the town of Athlone early in the morning, on my way to Galway, attended, as the mail departed from another street, by a rough headed fellow who carried my portmanteau, and, fearful of being late, jostled every body he met, and bawled “By your lave” in their ears, loud enough to crack a china teacup; in fact the horses were actually put to, and the vehicle was ready to start, barring requisite post-office arrangements, when I arrived at the coach-office. A broad shouldered, heavy man, Mr. Connor, the mail-guard, dressed in a tarnished royal livery, and otherwise bedizened in full costume, was determinedly stamping and jumping upon the white leather letter-bags, in order to force these bulky implements within sufficiently small space under the lid of the seat behind; but the more he jumped and the more he stamped, the less, as it seemed to me, did he complete matters to his mind. Meanwhile he inflicted serious discomfiture on those of the outside passengers whose legs were necessarily distorted in various uncomfortable positions by the raising the

said lid, till, by dint of might and the help of St. Patrick, he at last finished the operation. Putting an end to labours too violent to last a long time, he wiped his face with a handkerchief taken from the inside of his hat, reached downwards and received from the porter's hand my portmanteau, swung the same vigorously upon the roof of the coach, and then gave notice that all was right to the coachman. I had already ascended, and fronting the coach beside him, took my seat behind.

Without the testimony of one's own eyes and ears, it is quite impossible fully to comprehend in mortal imagination the noise and hubbub attendant on the departure of an Irish mail-coach at its first start, consisting of sounds and words different altogether and in intonation, from those produced and delivered by any of our English drivers; rather indeed resembling more closely the shouting of a Smithfield drover among two adverse commingled flocks of black-horned cattle. Mr. Connor blew the horn, and our driver, urging his cattle instantly to full gallop, continued to crack and ply his whip with utmost force, moving his arms and legs like a scaramouch, and hallooing in a key too peculiar, after what I have already said, to attempt to describe. In vain did the poor horses, stung to a degree of violent excitement by unceasing flagellation, fling their heads high in the air, and rolling and reeling, now on one side of the road, and again on the other, wince, flounder, and bolt, some traces long, others short, the chains rattling, and the coach itself meanwhile swinging, bumping, and pitching most tremendously; still did the minister of torment hover over the ill-fated heads of the four poor horses, and like Olympian Jove bran-

dishing his thunderbolts, or an ancient Roman in a chariot race imparting still increasing action to his fervid wheels, seem as if determined to find out, by actual experiment, the exact point or maximum of endurance of life and matter; of iron, wood, leather, bones, and sinews. But the too profuse expenditure of animal power seldom lasts long; so, as might in due course be expected, our pace, soon after we were clear of the town, at any rate before we had proceeded one mile, dwindled down to the trot. The effervescent spirit of the coachman at the same time having subsided, nothing more than a flourish at starting being ever intended, the cattle were now allowed to recover their wind, and he sat meditatively on the box tying knots in his whipcord; hereupon, since the winkers of the head-pieces fitted badly, each horse, as a party concerned, seemed to take especial interest in the latter operation.

There happened now to be nobody except our two selves on the hinder part of the coach, that is to say, myself and Mr. Connor, who, I have before hinted, was a strong square-built man, dressed in a tarnished royal mail-guardsman's livery; and since his visage was ruddy, his flaxen hair crisp and curly, his nose broad and flat, and he cherished moreover caroty whiskers of more than ordinary calibre, there was altogether in his complexion and appearance a shadow of resemblance, sufficient at least to recall to my mind on surveying his features, those of another unquestionably powerful animal, namely, a Devonshire bull.

The comforting beams of a newly risen sun had already illumined his features; a calm after violent exertion had settled on his spirits, and it appeared evident to me, even after so extremely short an

acquaintance, that he was a man at least of an independent mind and happy. His person was arranged in the easiest possible position ; his thoughts far away, in a brown study. He sat in fact in the attitude wherein a mail-coach guard ought to sit, particularly if he be broad and weighty, that is to say, well supported behind, bolt upright, and both hands in his coat-pockets. Before him rested, suspended upon the hinder part of the coach, a brass-barrelled blunderbuss, and a large silver watch in a square mahogany case took place by its side. At his right hand, fixed in a loop, was a long straight tin horn.

Were it not that the scenery on both sides of the road, and the soft refreshing air were conducive to reflection and silence, the present disinclination evinced by Mr. Connor to enter into converse was sufficient cause to trouble him with no remarks, wherefore I followed his example, and fell to rumination. The morning was cloudless, every blade of thick matted grass glistened with beads of dew, the wreathing mist rolled gently through the valley, the lark twittered high in the air, the blackbirds and thrushes whistled in the hedges, and the renovated earth exhaled healthful fragrance, mingled with the scent of wild flowers. As the eye ranged uninteruptedly over a wide expanse of this peculiarly fertile country, the exhilarated senses attracted and jumbled together sensible external objects with ideal fancies and bygone recollections, as it were in a mental kaleidoscope, wherein trifles the most minute, and of imaginative creation, appear once only in a lifetime, glitter for a solitary instant, and are then extinguished for ever.

An interjection from the coachman demolished in a

moment the dream of Mr. Connor. Suddenly he started on his feet, and hastily seizing in his grasp the aforesaid long tin horn, placed the same to his lips, and straining his capacious chest, poured through its inmost chambers a powerful blast.

An old half-starved horse, gently proceeding on the road before us, dragged slowly and at his leisure along behind him, a cart-load of newly cut black turf, the same neatly piled high above the cart, and a ragged boy, perched above all, sat on the top of the load. The harness consisted merely of a straw saddle and collar, with rope traces; the head-piece was a hempen halter without reins or winkers. The froward old horse, inspired by the sound of the horn with reminiscences of the chase, at any rate forgetting for an instant bodily infirmities and the load at his tail, responded fiercely to the summons by a loud snort, flung forwards his nose in defiance, and swinging his head first on one side and then on the other, made a desperate effort to trot. He was lame in a fore leg, and dead lame in one of the hind ones, the latter, incurably callous and stiff in the hock, moving outwards in a semicircle; nevertheless, he continued to shake his head, flourish his tail, and make progress by a pace of his own, which, bad as it was, notwithstanding the boy continued to cry gip-gip-gip with all his might, served to jolt him off the top of the cart and half empty the vehicle besides. Still louder than before did Mr. Connor blow his horn at this disaster, while the wicked old horse, encouraged thereby in the ways of unrighteousness, thus influenced by evil counsel, and enlivened by the heaving overboard his cargo, improved in his extra-

ordinary gait to such a degree, that it actually became even odds against the boy, who had risen from the ground unhurt by his fall, whether or not he might have good fortune to catch the runaway at all.

Mr. Connor meanwhile drove fresh volumes of wind continually through the tin horn, till as he at last placed the instrument in its sling, his jowl was resplendent with a rosy purple hue, and for many seconds his bulbous lips retained the impression of the mouth-piece.

Invariably, whenever men deserve well, or fancy they deserve well, either of their country or of themselves, they expect accordingly an adequate reward; and alas frequently, not as in the present instance, with the means in their own hands of remuneration. Mr. Connor, big with self-satisfaction at the exploit above related, no sooner resumed his seat and tranquil position, than it was plain to see he was taking his worldly affairs into serious consideration; that is to say, with his forefinger he traced the circumference of a pimple that grew on his nose with an air of serious attention, as if determining the figure of the earth, and then at once broke from the occupation as if at the flash of an important conclusion; and finally, he drew from the bottom of his coat pocket an iron tobacco-box. With the eye of a hawk or of an angler baiting his hook, he now arranged the preliminaries of the exotic refreshment,—moulding with broad thumb within his palm a pellet of the plastic weed, in size such as, composed of the fur and bones of slaughtered mice, or the husks of pilfered oats, is disgorged from the throat of the sated owl, or the sable patriarch of the

rookery, and, placing within the caverns of his jaws the savoury deposit, he leant backwards in his seat, with half-closed eyes bidding adieu for the time being to external objects, and relapsing into placid cogitation.

Ere long another disturbance defined the limits of present enjoyment ; at least an event occurred, such as it was, sufficient to awaken thoughts in a different series, and rouse other senses into action ; for the horses, apparently for no reason at all, other than that they and the driver happened to be of one mind, bolted across the road without more ado, dragging the vehicle close to the door of a small cabin by the road side, and there immediately drew up. Few events, however, happen in the world without a cause, and if one were now wanting, we were not doomed long to remain in ignorance. A heavy built country wench with a rosy countenance, smiling features, ruddy legs and feet, the latter furnished with stumpy toes, whereof not one in either set was either longer or shorter than the other, made her appearance under the coach-wheel, a bottle in one hand and a glass in the other, as if for the purpose of solving the question, looking at the same time steadily upwards with an enquiring expression of countenance. Not a minute was wasted in ceremony ; a glass of whiskey was first handed to the coachman, Mr. Connor then roused himself by a shake, deposited his quid *pro tempore* in the mouth-piece of the tin horn, and received another.

The effect of the mountain beverage was really instantaneous ; and partly probably because the time allotted to the colloquy was necessarily short, partly owing to the artificial excitement produced

by the whiskey, the long pent up spirits of Mr. Connor now found vent, and burst forth in a vein of sparkling badinage with Judy. "Did ye get the black stockings I sent ye?" exclaimed he without preface or apology to our rural cup-bearer; whereupon the poor maid was abashed, and looking down blushingly at her own red legs, attracted the attention of all the outside passengers in the same line of direction. "Ah now, Mr. Connor!" replied poor Judy, and having but few words to say, inflicted with her broad thick palm the blow of a mallet on the cork of the bottle, as the coach drove off. Mr. Connor with fluent readiness rejoined, and Judy essayed to retort, but the former, more conversant in the polished phrases of society, defeated his humble antagonist, whereat the latter had recourse to more pastoral images, and with round and high dried missiles that lay conveniently by the roadside, forthwith pursuing the coach, assailed the recreant Mr. Connor. "Ah yuop," said the coachman in his usual style of energetic apostrophe, as the first hard clod lighted full on the broad back of Mr. Connor, who, nothing daunted, seized his tin horn, and fronting his enemy sounded a loud blast in token of defiance, when a second pellet dispatched from the fist of Judy with unerring aim, pitched short of its destination, and a third falling harmlessly on the ground, bore with it a receipt in full of all her grievances.

The horses, refreshed with a sup of water, shook the thistles from their noses, and galloped gaily along, transporting our trundling vehicle through a country abounding in high, slightly-built stone-walls, and growing apparently wilder and wilder every

mile we proceeded. The peasants, as if time there were of no value, gazed listlessly on our merry career, leaning in motionless attitude on their long handled spades, while the boys ten or twelve years of age pursued us on foot, sometimes for two or three miles at a stretch, without once stopping to take wind. How little has abstract poverty to do with the energies of our nature ; the rags of these urchins flapped about their bare legs and thighs as they bounded buoyantly along, vexed by no thought or earthly care, but stimulated wholly and solely in their onward course by the mere fun of running.

An old man and woman by the road side were in the act of ringing a large pig as our coach passed by, whereupon the contrast in countenance between the aged pair was curious to behold ; the man freed of all mortal care, and the poor woman, as the weak sex usually are, invested with the arduous part of the operation. The woman, by a cord firmly fixed behind the pig's tusks, steadily held on and pulled, while the man, straddling Colossus-like across the animal's back, stood at ease and stared at our coach ; as if, a lord of the creation, having placed in equilibrio the forces subject to his control, he then had nothing else in the whole wide world to do but to take his pleasure. Far different was the province of the woman, fronting face to face her spouse, and vexed by the merciless caprices of their joint prisoner and victim, which, since pigs pull by twitches, now pulled like his forefathers, at every jerk causing sympathetic reaction of the old woman's hips, such as being perfectly unsuited to her appearance and time of life, roused her frame to painful energy, and rendered the scene still more ludicrous. Though

her tongue was at liberty, and she vented her spleen plentifully, the tirade disturbed not in anywise the equanimity of her husband, whom I saw, not before we had advanced on our way nearly out of sight, careless apparently to which of the two parties the member might belong, stoop down leisurely and pierce the pig's nose.

"The boy must be light as a bird," they say, who can hop over a six-feet wall, without displacing the stones in Galway; and without other molestation than the natural wind and the storm, one is inclined to wonder how walls so slight at any rate hold together. Through a country unrelieved by other objects than fences like these crossing each other over a flat expanse, in every direction, the Galway mail now proceeded at a fast but steady pace, the horses alternately trotting and cantering over hard stony roads, till the excitement of travelling and trifles having completely subsided, a general silence prevailed among the passengers, who one and all fell to nodding drowsily to the monotonous rumbling of the wheels.

Few, during the journey, were the words and sentiments uttered by Mr. Connor, now fanned by the broad pinion of Morpheus to an enviable state of repose, and exhibiting a figure so effectually supported by fat and muscle, that whether sleeping or waking it were all one to him, since barring the trouble of opening and shutting both his eyes, the same identical attitude served equally for either. He was sound asleep. Now and then animated even in the depth of heavy slumber by a waking sense of duty, he would open a corner of one of the said optics to satisfy himself

that all was right, and then drop off again. Yet though the ever-living moral sense, the mystical companion of repose, thus whispered not unheeded in his ear, the hardy physical frame was dead to external assault. A phalanx of flies on his face pursued their gambols over the broad domain without let or hindrance from the lord of the manor, and even when half a dozen of the troublesome insects together, like sheep at the edge of a muddy brook, jostled one another at a corner of his mouth, he would then merely purse up his lips in his sleep and appear to smile. It was a happy, by no means a troublous smile, a smile as if he were dreaming of dairy-maids' kisses, or of playing the flute.

Mr. Connor peacefully slept and snored near a quarter of an hour, when the sound of his own name shouted loudly by the coachman recalled his scattered senses; that is to say, he opened both his eyes, and taking the implement out of its sling began to polish with the palm of his hand the brass barrel of the blunderbuss; then he started on his feet and blew his horn lustily, for we had now arrived at a sudden turn in the road at the bottom of a very steep hill. The sound of the horn, the clatter of galloping horses, and our sudden approach as we rapidly turned the corner, were altogether causes that, combined, shed dismay and terror over an humble party, that now forming a small cavalcade, and proceeding in the same direction immediately before us, were driven to a serious and even painful exertion to get out of harm's way. The docile piebald horse, the same before mentioned at Athlone, now caparisoned as a beast of burthen, a common

pack-horse, bearing a few ill-assorted packages badly secured on his back, his head and tail, as if he were conscious of a state of degradation, drooping towards the earth, was slowly advancing up the hill. A few paces in the rear followed the travelling equestrians, the young woman looking ill and jaded, and leaning heavily on her husband's arm, while the melancholy countenance and dejected air of the latter recalled forcibly to my mind the former picture of poverty I had seen during their late performance, and which was now pourtrayed in still more lively colours. Yet it was no sooner viewed than we were gone, and as the Galway mail rolled along, the young unhappy pair had made way for the boisterous equipage, the piebald horse had meekly stepped aside, the little party in a few seconds were far in the rear, and as Mr. Connor obstreperously winded his horn, nothing remained of the spectacle that had appeared and passed away, than as it were a mere recollection,—an unsubstantial vision of the uphill walk of life. * * * * *

CHAPTER XV.

A Coffee-room—A Dinner in Galway—A Bacchanalian Party—
An accomplished Waiter—Personal Appearance—Moral
Qualities—Evening Capability—Nightly Festivity—Morning
Graces—Departure from Galway.

ALTOGETHER we made a prosperous journey from Athlone to Galway, where the hotel stands in the open square, and the name of the host, though I never saw his face, is I believe Kilroy. My principal dealings were with the head man or waiter, a busy active fellow, mighty civil and communicative withal, whom every body called by the name of Mick; in fact nobody there shouted rudely “waiter,” but all addressed him as I said before by the name of Mick, in a friendly way; wherefore, in order to be like other people, and particularly since my interest lay the same way, I called him Mick too. It were well to wave ceremony at first sight, since I had occasion for his services, in the way of procuring a lively young turbot, of which in the season there are plenty in Galway, as well as of most other sorts of fine fish, for dinner. Therefore “Mick,” said I, coming at once to the point, “what can I have for dinner?” “SIRR,” replied Mick, without a moment’s hesitation, “any thing you’ll be plased to minshin and you’ll have it immediantly.” Whereupon I rejoined, giving him to understand I should content myself with a small delicate turbot, or a couple of fried soles, and take my chance for the rest according to the state of

the larder. A good natured smile now passed across Mick's countenance, as he merely remarked the day was hot, and he felt "extremely wake;" at the same time perspiring rather copiously; in point of fact evidently suffering from the effects of whiskey, drunk either the day before, or on the same morning; and finally, after enumerating various other articles, none of which I succeeded in obtaining, I was obliged to remain satisfied with the usual every-day fare of the traveller in most of the inns in Ireland; that is to say, of the *congé d'elire* which Mick in full confidence proposed in the beginning of our conference, came in the end, a couple of chickens not a great deal bigger than larks, and a dish of dry, hard, black mutton chops.

Abundance of company just now occupied this said coffee-room in Galway, a greater influx of persons than usual being inclined to festivity, and though the hour was not later than five o'clock, the jingling of teaspoons and ringing of glasses betokened business of the evening speedily about to commence. As the parties sat at small tables in different parts of the room, besides at one large one spread in the middle, I had soon an opportunity of witnessing the ability and nimbleness wherewith Mick acquitted himself in satisfying the wants of various people who would fain have obliged him to move at the same moment in many different directions. Preferring for the present a walk on the sea-shore to an atmosphere becoming more and more charged every moment with spirituous exhalations, I extended my ramble to a period beyond sunset, and having left the inn soon after I had hastily dispatched my dinner, returned merely with the object of retiring early to rest in

order to proceed farther on my journey the next morning.

During my absence an ample gathering of the votaries of Bacchus were collected in the coffee-room ; the apartment was in fact as full as it could conveniently hold of people, who for the most part had rallied round the large table, the centre of argument and vociferation, where many an elbow was raised in obeisance to the jolly god, the ladle continually saluted the punch-bowl, clouds of smoke rolled from the pipes and cigars, and Mick's figure appeared pre-eminent in the foreground, as busy as a red headed midshipman in a general engagement. When emerging from a pillar of vapour he stood with a complacent sleepy smile ready to do my bidding, from causes external and internal he had become heated within and without, his face was as red as a salamander, and his nose, to use a common phrase, would have burnt the toes of a mosquito ; having on the present occasion stood fire long and gallantly till he had arrived at last at a certain critical point of capability, when in point of fact he was able to do just nothing at all. In personal appearance he was a fair complexioned man, with extremely light blue bloodshot eyes, thin flaxen hair, and tender skin ; so that the latter more visibly betokened mischief brewing within, being on his forehead and cheeks, in some parts red, in others white, the cuticle peeling away in the red parts, in film, like the ashes of burnt paper. But his moral qualities most deserve the attention of the reader, since on a short acquaintance, and from all I could thereby learn, Mick had contrived to obtain and preserve the respect of the world, though by no means a perfect man, and moreover possessed of

one very material failing. Whether owing to the effect of a too open heart or a too open throat, or, doating strongly on his native country, he bore a still stronger attachment to her island produce, so it did happen that, somehow or other, he swallowed every day a larger portion of whiskey, strictly speaking, than as in duty bound, and became even an Irishman. One gave him a “dthrop,” and t’other gave him a “dthrop,” out of civility, or respect to his vocation, and one drop after another, allowing time enough, as the poet says, makes a hole in a stone ; and the road from the stomach to Mick’s brains, in like manner, by dint of traffic and hard usage, became at last wofully out of repair. Had a stronger head than his own been screwed on his shoulders, it were altogether another affair; but just as things stood, at the close of every day he invariably parted with his five senses, one after another. A twilight of instinct survived the demise of reason, that carried him through his business hours ; and though, since one eye would shut, and the second followed the example of its brother, he was unable cleverly to navigate across the room, he always distinguished his own from another body’s name, and said, “Coming your honor,” all in one syllable, in a way peculiar to himself, blurting out the words together in a lump. Moral excellence in the end prevailed over physical frailties, and Mick not only preserved his situation, but, as I hinted before, held the world in perfect good humour ; since he made it a rule at all times and seasons, rather than offend a friend by refusing a glass when offered, to convert every square inch of his person to a Solfatara, and give every body a civil answer just so long as, drunk or sober, he was able to speak at all. Social

qualities like these gained Mick universal popularity,—day after day, he thus performed with eclat his duty,—and every night retired to rest with the reputation of a very “ixcillint waither,” if not all over the kingdom of Ireland, at least in the town of Galway.

When I entered the coffee-room, about to go to rest, Mick, his faculties having long since passed the meridian, was doubly anxious, and quite unable to render any body assistance, and for the same identical reason, more determined that no other body should render assistance to him. With extreme kindness of countenance he prevented me from lighting my own candle, fortunately at last succeeding, after making several ineffectual lounges, to hit the flame. Striving to maintain a decorous perpendicularity, he then extended the same towards me with the grave air of a land surveyor looking across his stakes, still pertinaciously holding fast the candlestick, till, his senses subsiding lethargically, I took it from his hand. Startled by this latter action, he looked surprised at the ends of his fingers, finding the candle gone. By a muscular effort of his forehead, with difficulty opening his eyes, his wits meanwhile abroad in pursuit of lost recollections; up went one leg toward the ceiling, as if about to go he knew not where, when his head at the same time receiving a bias from the jingling glasses, he wheeled round to the company, and before I again attracted his notice, I was out of the room.

I had scarcely dropped asleep when I was awakened by a tremendous and most unusual noise; such

was the roaring and clattering among contending parties below stairs, that it appeared to me actually as if all the furniture in the house was being thrown out of the windows. Besides, there was racing along the passages ; people continually ran to every part of the house, first up stairs and then down again ; and I distinctly heard, in the apartment immediately adjoining my own, the voices of persons whispering, as if in consultation with one another. Thinking these deliberations were the consequence of some quarrel, and bore reference to preliminaries with which I had nothing to do, I consequently took the precaution of immediately locking my door, leaving the bacchanalians to settle matters in any way they chose ; nevertheless the whispering and clattering continued as before for the full space of half an hour, and how much longer I am unable to say, for I fell into a sleep so sound, that it was past eight o'clock before I awaked in the morning.

Even at this late hour, in the middle of summer, not a single soul, when I got up, was stirring in the inn at Galway ; the doors and shutters were closed, and silence now reigned as of a deserted dwelling, or a city of the plague. The debauchery of the preceding night was followed by the stillness of the grave. A solitary cat rubbed her sides against my legs ; the sand on the boards grated under my shoes ; I walked along the corridors, and called again and again, but nobody rose at the summons from their heavy slumbers. I knocked at doors, rang bells, made a serious disturbance wherever I went, and reiterated the name of Mick as loud I was able.

I had arrived at a pestiferous region, pregnant with

the smell of stale tobacco-smoke, where bits of lemon-peel and the burnt ends of cigars lay profusely scattered on the ground, still shouting the name of Mick as I walked, with incessant clamour. The creaking of a small door at last caught my attention, and the next moment I saw a red nose, the property of Mick himself, protruding from a sort of hole in the wall, or den, or sty, or small apartment, or whatever appellative may be proper to apply to his dormitory; from whence as he emerged in inelegant dishabille, words are wanting to describe the spectral image of habitual intemperance that then stood before me.

“ His eyes with scalding rheum were galled and red.”

So far may be cited true to the letter; not so of “ cold palsy shook his limbs,” for he was in a burning fever.

“ *Obstupuit, steteruntquæ comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit.*”

“ Stupid as an owl, hair all on end, and throat as dry as a brick-bat.”

This might be literally quoted of his miserable condition. “ Mick,” said I, “ pray give me my bill;” whereat Mick yawned drowsily, and uttering a sound between a sigh and a groan, with either hand rubbed mercilessly both his eyes, and yawned again. Again he essayed to speak and failed, made another effort, was still silent; till finding it as indispensable to stimulate the organs of speech as to resin a fiddle, he set matters to rights by taking a dram. A full hour elapsed before I procured my bill; in the mean time Mick was sufficiently recovered to unravel the mystery of the last night’s proceedings. I asked him the meaning of the terrible noise. “ Noise!” said he, “ sure and twas an iligant ball.” “ Ball!”

said I, “and the ladies, whence came they?” “We had no ladies at all at all, divil the one,” said Mick. “No ladies, and a ball, a ball without ladies! impossible,” said I in an incredulous tone. “Ah now!” said Mick, “sure and we had the cook and the howl of the maids, and the boys sint for the piper, and all got partners apace.” * * *

I paid my bill, and my jaunting-car was at the door. I joyfully took my seat, Mick threw in my portmanteau, and waved his hand in token of adieu.

Once more clear of the town, I blessed my stars to find myself on the king’s highway, sitting side-wise, back to back, driver and traveller, jiggling along, over the rough stones, on the road to Ennis, about to visit, by the way of Limerick and Tralee, the lakes of Killarney. * * *

M E M O I R S

OF AN

ASSISTANT COMMISSARY-GENERAL.

MEMOIRS
OF AN
ASSISTANT COMMISSARY-GENERAL.

CHAPTER I.

Land at Lisbon—Appointed Clerk in the Commissariat—Arrive at Badajoz—Experimental Duty—First Start on Field Service—Depot at Coimbra—My Duties—Daily Fare and Dessert—Aspect of the Town—Female Water-carriers—A Night Funeral—Put in charge of an Artillery Brigade—Latin a Key to the Portuguese Language—Busacos—A Night March—Service of Artillery Brigade—Communication among the Army.

IF there be a particular spot within the whole compass of the map of England less intersected by the pen of the draftsman, and consequently more blank than another, it is a small peninsular nook at the mouth of the Thames, bounded on three sides by that river, the Medway, and the great Dover road. Here I passed the greater part of my early days, and, except in so far as relates to an acquired taste for and proficiency in rural sports, slender indeed was the stock I carried away with me of worldly knowledge.

I first left my paternal home in the spring of the year 1808 to do captain's duty with the West Kent regiment of militia, then quartered at Woodbridge in Suffolk, and after having, in the course of that service during the next twelve months, visited various parts of the country, I obtained three months' leave of absence from

my commanding-officer to proceed to Portugal. I accordingly forthwith embarked in the packet at Falmouth, and in the spring of 1809 landed in Lisbon.

It were needless to recount to the reader those family disappointments, that total change of prospects, which, independent of my own control, first compelled me, unprepared and unexpectedly, to abandon the tranquil pursuits of a country life and seek a vocation; still more to relate the difficulties, that now arriving in Portugal, unversed in the ways of business, unexercised in habits of application, appeared spread forth on the world's wide chart before me: it is sufficient to state that, impatient of delay, and finding little chance of realizing even the moderate hopes I had entertained, after a few weeks exhausted in fruitless application for employment, I accepted the appointment of commissariat clerk, at a stipend of seven shillings and sixpence a-day, and joined the British army. I crossed the Tagus to Aldea Gallega accompanied by a Portuguese servant whom I hired expressly for the service, but the man, whether already satisfied with foreign adventure, or disliking the prospect of a journey to Spain on foot, at any rate decamped almost as soon as we entered the village, leaving me with a few articles of necessary equipment packed on the back of a small mule, to find my way alone to the Duke of Wellington's head quarters at Badajoz as well as I could.

On arriving at Badajoz, I reported myself without delay, according to the instructions I had received, to the officer at the head of the commissariat department, by whom I was immediately asked a variety of questions, to all which at the present moment I do

not exactly recollect the answers, but will be bold to say, that relating directly to my previous experience in business, they were decidedly unsatisfactory. Finally, I was consigned to experimental duty in a solitary apartment adjoining the chief's office, furnished with a Provision Abstract, and ordered to make a copy. A document such as I had never set eyes on before, being on that occasion put into my hands, I may just as well, merely for the edification of the reader unlearned in such matters, state briefly its description ; it was a detailed account of issues made to the troops of various articles of provisions and forage specified in pounds avoirdupois and ounces, within numerous columns ruled upon a huge sheet of elephant paper. Each horizontal line, of which altogether there were not less than eighty or ninety with a number and date at the beginning, represented a set of triplicate vouchers ; and extreme neatness of execution was indispensable in placing each digit precisely under its fellow, according to the proper station in the decimal scale, in order to facilitate the heavy sums of addition that formed the totals at the foot. With extreme toil I at last produced the nearest resemblance I was able to make of a counterpart, but the lines perpendicular and horizontal diverged so far out of a parallel direction, the figures, some large and some small, were so ill-formed and ill-placed, and this my first attempt was in point of fact so complete a failure, that perhaps fortunately, I was never required to repeat the same task, while I remained in that office.

It happened about this time, not long after the battle of Talavera, when the British army broke from cantonments around Badajoz and commenced their

march towards the valley of the Mondego, that a young officer in the department, recently invested with a commission, was put in charge of a portion of the troops then about to depart by the way of Abrantes, across the Tagus to Coimbra. On this occasion I was attached to him as clerk, thereby commencing a service wherein I was treated invariably, during the whole period I remained under his orders, with the utmost kindness and consideration ; and I thus formed acquaintance with the individual before adverted to as a member of one of the principal families in the island of Guernsey, in another part of this volume.

Twenty-seven years have now rolled over the head of this my former master, since the day on which, distinguished by a blue uniform coat with cuffs and collar of black velvet, unbuttoned in easy costume, and pantaloons decorated with a stripe of reddish brown Spanish leather, cut in zigzag Vandyke pattern, and extending the whole length of the outer seam, proudly spurred at the heels, a white streaming feather in his cocked hat, massive gold epaulettes on his shoulders ; mounted on a long-tailed Spanish charger, and accompanied by his clerk aforesaid on a small mule, both together on a sunshiny morning rode out of the town of Badajoz.

The above description of dress, the fashion of the sword, generally of a cavalry pattern, being quite *ad libitum*, is such as the King's regulations, more or less modified according to the fancy of the wearer, prescribed at this period to a field commissary with the British army. I do not mean to infer an overstrained interpretation of the limit established by universal custom, on the part of

the present individual, though, as is well known, a latitude in dress has heretofore been exclusively made a subject of censure on officers of the commissariat department. Nevertheless, without reason or justice, for a variegated costume prevailed, not only in their case, but generally in every corps and grade in the army; even from the Duke of Wellington, equipped in a white cloak and white cravat, to the lowest subaltern downwards. As regards the commissariat, the duke probably was unwilling, when the supplies of the army were at stake, to deprive them in their dealings with the local authorities of the advantage of a style of dress, which, such as it was, being permitted through the whole campaign, may unquestionably be said to have received His Grace's sanction.

Than the commissariat officer above referred to, there are few men in the world, either in a moral sense, or in matters of business, of more scrupulous exactitude; indeed, at this time, anxiety feverishly excited at the apprehension of responsibility, led him to perform himself, all and every part of the official duty; so that partly wishing to be lenient towards me, partly, and very properly, distrusting my capability, and partly, himself possessing a natural born intuitive love for the pen and the ruler, it followed that little sedentary occupation at all events fell to my lot on the way, and when I arrived in Coimbra I was little better versed than on the day I started from Badajoz, in my new profession.

At the town of Coimbra, pleasantly situated in the vicinity of the sea-port of Figueiras and on the banks of the Mondego, was established a considerable dépôt of stores and provisions for the army; and

here a regular routine of office duty, such as it was, now for the first time devolved upon me. Simple as were these my avocations, I was subjected to confinement in the office the whole of the day, drawing checks for returns of provisions and forage on the storekeeper in charge of the stores, upon documents, whereon it was my duty to see that the specified number of officers, rank and file, were correctly vouched by the commanding officer of the regiment or detachment; that the quantities of provisions drawn were correctly estimated, and that the receipt was signed by the person duly authorized. These vouchers, in those days furnished in triplicate, were then entered in an abstract such as I have before described, for the purpose of being afterwards incorporated in a general account.

After a few days' practice, although nothing new remained to be learnt, yet from previous want of usage on my own part, and the multiplicity of applicants for rations on the other, I had enough to do to keep down the press of business each day; however, I became by degrees reconciled to a duty which, while the troops remained in cantonments, yielded little enough of variety.

At the close of each day, that is to say, so soon as the brunt of work had passed away, my new master, whom I am happy now to call my old friend, and myself, dined regularly together as comfortably as circumstances would permit; welcoming contentedly a meal, whereat youth and health supplied the want of luxurious viands. Week after week every day, almost without an exception, I verily believe, we attacked the same identical dish during the whole winter; that is to say a large piece of plain boiled

ration beef, with such vegetables as could be procured. Deficiencies were afterwards amply supplied by a profusion of oranges fresh from the tree, here at all times to be purchased twenty for a vintaine, or a little more than a penny ; and frequently hanging in unplucked clusters on their native fragrant dark green bough. We usually restricted our dessert to a vintaine's worth, that is a score ; but since in this native fruit the white substance immediately under the yellow rind, which, in English imported oranges is tough and leathery, actually melted in the mouth, in appearance resembling the watery covering of an ice-plant, we were not unfrequently induced to send again to the market-place, and complete our complement to scores apiece. One sorrowful exception I remember making to this code of frugality, in the instance of an experiment, by way of variety, upon a ragoût of lampreys, which pottage, prepared by a professed Portuguese cook, made me so very ill, that I was the more happy after such an abomination of grease and garlic, to return to humble fare.

Under the influence of new habits, affording at least regular occupation, the certain source of satisfactory reflections, I continued to live at Coimbra till the rainy season passed away, and fine weather sat in. Then, indeed, might be truly compared to angels' visits, those few moments of leisure, or rather occasional business errands, that now and then called me abroad to look around, and breathe in momentary freedom the pure, clear air of this beautiful city. As to the rainy season, as most people are aware, rain in Portugal descends not in drops, but in streams, pouring like hail downwards for days together, with uniform and unabated force like a severe, transient,

English thunder shower upon the bubbling pavement. The more charming the contrast with Christmas sunshine; at which season,—the harvest of oranges,—the town of Coimbra rivals the garden of the Hesperides, occupying the side of a small mountain, bedecked to the very brow with houses of snowy whiteness, intermingled here and there with groups of orange-trees, the latter laden with fruit glowing in full pride and splendour, while the Mondego below, like a peaceful lake, spreads indolently along its flat sandy shore. Troops of the black-eyed daughters of a burning sun, each bearing gracefully a pitcher on her head, each in dress and occupation a semblance of woman in the primitive ages, here congregate during the livelong day, and here, such is the gently shelving bank, that the bare-kneed damsels are compelled, ere they can effectually dip their vessels in the stream, to wade thirty or forty yards into the river. Here the nymph on her diurnal pilgrimage is not unfrequently waylaid by a wily suitor, and many a lightning glance darts furtively though not less effectively from the dark brow of some lurking student of the university, many of whom, parading the streets in black gowns, and bareheaded, are conspicuous personages among the inhabitants of the town.

Well do I remember one soft balmy evening in the month of February, when, the windows of my apartment being wide open, I heard, long after nightfall, the sound of music. The air was mild, even at that season of the year as in England in the month of June, and on looking into the street, I saw a funeral party accompanying the corpse of some distinguished person, followed by a band of friars chaunting a

solemn requiem, all slowly moving towards the place of interment. I immediately ran down stairs and joined the procession, wherein, on a bier borne on men's shoulders, and attended by a long line of torch-bearers walking two and two, lay a female form dressed in splendid apparel, and covered with various flowers. The simple but deep tones of the human voice were on this occasion most awfully penetrating ; calculated to exorcise, as it were, the very inmost feelings of the soul, to a degree unknown in England, except indeed at the funeral of a soldier. One single wave of this tide of harmony might have overwhelmed a whole host of our iron-hearted hired undertakers, together with their horses, plumes, and mercenary black velvet paraphernalia. I accompanied the body to the grave, where I observed that custom also dictated a similar anomaly such as is universally adopted according to our military practice, —that is to say, the moment the rites were performed, an indecorous and hasty rush took place of the people out of the church, in perfect accordance with the sudden change of tone and gesture which discipline prescribes to the warrior on duty, springing at once from a melancholy, sepulchral dirge, to a light airy step, his ear, even before the fume of the votive volley has mingled with the air, greeted by a jocund tune. I know not whence the practice of returning in quick time from a funeral originated among our army, but when thus in a catholic country, nature, wound to a high pitch of feeling, seems voluntarily to pursue a course actuated apparently by a similar impulse with ours, we are at liberty perhaps to conclude, that the analogy may

readily be traced, by those who read sufficiently deeply, in the philosophy of the human heart.

I certainly never witnessed a more sudden change than was wrought in the deportment of the spectators on the present occasion. I stood among the crowd in the aisle of the church close to the grave during the performance of a splendid anthem, wherein the vocal powers of the friars were beyond ordinary excellence, and otherwise universal silence and deep quietude universally prevailed. The moment the music was over and the religious rites concluded, two men seized the bedizened corpse, arrayed in silk stockings and all its finery, one holding the ankles, the other the wrists, and then without ceremony, the very sinews cracking under their rude violence, unrelentingly tossed it into a hole a few feet deep under the floor, which served as its grave. Quickslime was then hastily thrown upon the mortal remains, the sexton hardly set to work with his shovel, the earth was speedily thrown whence it came, the torches were suddenly extinguished, and every one, as well and as quick as he could, made the best of his way in the dark to his home.

At the end of April, 1810, the French having about that time manifested an intention to invest the Spanish garrison-town of Ciudad Rodrigo, Colonel Robe's nine-pounder brigade of artillery was suddenly ordered, amid a general movement of the army, to the frontier of Beira, whereupon I was appointed to the commissariat charge of this brigade, and unexpectedly received an increase of pay from seven shillings and sixpence, to ten shillings a day. Although imperfectly inured to my present sedentary

occupation, for since leaving school, I had seldom ever happened to sit still for half an hour at a time in the middle of the day, I had not altogether unprofitably submitted to irksome confinement. Some detachments were continually passing through to the army, others remained quartered in the town, comprising together portions of the troops in various and manifold branches, whose provision returns all passing through my hands, I gained thereby a general insight into the routine of duty. Nevertheless, as a captive from a dungeon, I hailed the beneficence of fortune, that now once more restored me to former habits, and robust exercise.

It was I think exactly on the 28th of April, when performing my first act as a public accountant, I passed a receipt for four bullocks, delivered to me for the use of the brigade under my charge, and gave credit in my accounts for a specified weight of meat in the usual manner. The brigade of men and horses now supplied by me with rations of provisions and forage furnished returns for the same, once in three days; bread, wine, and forage I procured from the inhabitants, giving receipts, payable at head-quarters, for the quantities, and I rendered my accounts at the end of each month, according to the forms I had already seen, including that of the formidable abstract before mentioned, now fortunately reduced to a more practicable scale, a serjeant of the brigade being moreover appointed my store-keeper, on whom I drew checks as I had been used to do before at Coimbra. The prospect of a stirring life now appeared again to rise before me, I felt myself becoming a free agent daily more and more, a Spanish capataz reported to me his arrival from the com-

missary-general, with instructions to place himself and forty-two stout mules under my orders; and finally, in this as it were the opening dawn of prosperity, as when disconsolately steering through a fog, new objects suddenly appear and others brighten till the sun at last breaks forth in full splendour, such I may really say was my gladness of heart when, after the above related humble acquisitions of independence, the officers of the artillery brigade to which I was appointed invited me an honorary member to their mess. A follower of their fortunes, I lived happily with these kind companions during the eventful proceedings of the next twelve months, including the advance of the brigade to the battle of Busacos, the retreat of the allied army to the lines at Torres Vedras, and the subsequent advance of the troops in pursuit of Marshal Massena, till the battle of Fuentes d'Onor. My occupations, it is true, were altogether distinct from theirs during the whole of the day; but after the morning's fatigue was over, whether in a well-roofed or a roofless house, a tent, or bivouacked in the open air, I felt myself once more restored to the consolations of society, and animated by the consciousness of possessing a home.

In conversing in Portuguese with the inhabitants, on matters relating to commissariat business, or referring to the duties of my office, I was mainly assisted by Latin, with which language perhaps more than half the words in the former tongue are strictly identical. I may be permitted therefore humbly here to set forth in my own person a practical instance to those of the present day inclined to underrate and weigh that language in the narrow scale of intrinsic,

absolute, and immediate value, for I had constant cause to rejoice in classical reminiscences, not only in the instance above stated as lending a key to the language of the country I was in, but also as a never ending source of mental enjoyment. Without taking further opportunity in this place of feebly advocating the cause of classical literature, I will barely express my sincere conviction, that men's minds, allured by the excellent code of morals exhibited by the ancient writers of Greece and Rome, were absolutely in no slight degree prepared thereby to receive the first doctrines of Christianity. If this be true, and since these writings, moreover, both in prose and poetry, are not surpassed even in modern days, the early period of life can hardly be said to be thrown away in acquiring a material which, though all thereon are permitted to build, the power of a young arm alone can effectively drag from the mine. The real fact after all is, that the classics, to the end of time, notwithstanding occasional influences produced by the love of change and novelty on the course of education, will for ever, even by those not themselves aware of the sentiment, be had in respect; and though now for a while somewhat neglected amid morbid fashion and the march of intellect, I really regard the indication merely as it were a riot or flourish at starting in the Easter hunt of knowledge, whence all will in due time return to the true scent, with noses more or less scratched among the brambles of error.

It is pleasing at all events to observe good taste gradually gaining ground, and this inference was considerably strengthened by a little book that accidentally, a short time since, fell into my hands—a

tour written by the eccentric back-woodsman, Colonel Crockett, who fell gallantly fighting in the Texian war. In these pages may be seen the following sentiment on education, a sentiment conceived and uttered even by a modern individual of republican America, and, as indicative, I think, of the reaction to which I have just alluded, therefore entitled to the more attention. I give it without further comment in his own words, spoken at a meeting of the inhabitants of Elizabeth-Town, Kentucky, on the 19th of November, 1834. "For," said Colonel Crockett, in reply to a complimentary address delivered to him in the course of his tour; "for," said he, "I have never had the opportunity of an education, which enables men to use the refined language that is common for gentlemen to use filling high stations, such as I have been chosen to fill, by a portion of the people of Tennessee."*

For my own part I certainly never felt reason to repent having obtained the little that I ever possessed of classical knowledge, although certainly free to confess that that little might have been readily dispensed with amid many of my present avocations, particularly as to the expenditure, without the aid of Latin, of some hundreds of dollars, which now, for the occasional service of purchasing supplies of bread and wine for the men, and green forage for the horses of the brigade, were placed in my hands as an accountant. It became my duty to carry to account this and other succeeding imprests of money, under various prescribed forms, with which till then I had never been made acquainted, my knowledge of arithmetic at the

* Colonel Crockett's Tour, written by himself, published by Cade and Hart, Philadelphia, 1835.

same time being certainly on an extremely limited scale. As an instance elucidating the degree of my previous proficiency, I may state, that, in making calculations in Portuguese money, which operation is, as most people are aware, extremely simple, relating to only one denomination of reis, eight hundred to the dollar, which reis are added together without transmutation, according to the plain decimal scale, I perfectly well remember, that in bringing these reis into dollars, I never omitted in the work one single cypher of the divisor 800, no matter of how many figures the dividend consisted, to the end of the process.

The first memorable affair whereof I was an eye witness was of Busacos. It is fit I should here at once inform the reader, by the way, that a commissary is a non-combatant; that as his business is to provide the troops with food, it necessarily follows that while they are engaged with the enemy, his avocations lie in other directions; and I may add, as regards myself personally, that if ever curiosity led me, as it frequently did, to a spot where I found myself unexpectedly exposed to fire, I invariably made my way out of it as quick and straight as I decently could. But for the very reason that a commissary is a non-combatant, it becomes the more necessary that I should shew, within the compass of this short memoir, putting myself wholly out of the question, those instances which tend to describe generally the life of a commissariat officer on active service, pointing out, the above being the rule, occasional exceptions. This remark, however, more applies by and by, as I proceed, for I have not much to say of the affair of Busacos. Before I go farther,

I will also by the way observe, that I write at present entirely on memory, without reference to private memoranda, at the same time feeling tolerably satisfied that, even should I inadvertently fall into error as to numbers, dates, locality, or what not, such deviations will by no means serve to withhold a faithful general impression of events to the reader.

I was quartered on the morning of the battle at a small cottage a mile below the heights, and in order to communicate on matters of duty with my commanding officer, I had occasion to go early to the spot where the artillery brigade was in position. A sharp fire of musquetry was incessantly kept up, as I advanced towards the scene of action, whence I met several Portuguese caçadores returning wounded, for the most part their arms bound up, and the blood bursting through the bandages. The French general, Simon, a small red faced man, looking angry and flustered, had just then been taken prisoner, and his epaulettes in the struggle torn from his shoulders. On the brow of the hill lay the first slain victim of the battle-field I had ever beheld—a fine young French officer, at that moment breathing his last. My brigade was posted on a commanding height, surmounted by low, bluff rocks, through the clefts of which the guns were pointed, as through embrasures, upon the enemy below, and altogether, the point here taken up formed a formidable fortification. In the rear, a considerable spread of flat ground, sheltered from the enemy's fire by the brow of the hill, was occupied by our troops, and below, in our front, at the bottom of a precipitous descent, was the pine grove whence the French riflemen's balls continued incessantly, both before

and after the action, to rip the air in our level above with a discordant twang. Behind the pine grove, on the open flat country, were the massive square columns of the combined French army. Captain Robert Lawson being on this day in immediate command of the guns, pacing backwards and forwards, his head and shoulders exposed above the level of the said rocks, he desired me to sit down under shelter while we held communication. I remained seated accordingly in perfect security, while he walked steadily backwards and forwards, as he had done before.

Having finished a conference which lasted only a few minutes, I was afterwards led by curiosity, previously to returning to the spot where I had tied up my mule, to walk a little distance to the right of our line, and look down from between a cleft in the rocks, at a place where a few gunners, who for the present had nothing else to do, had collected for the same purpose, upon the enemy below. My stay here was but short, for though the balls, which flew thickly over our heads, were all apparently extremely high in the air, one by chance hit a gunner on the protuberant part of the skull, under the right ear, so that he fell down close at my feet. The ball, striking with a blow that sounded like a hard slap on the face, flattened itself against the bone under the scalp, whence it was afterwards extracted, I believe, without effecting serious injury. The wounded man was raised from the ground and carried away to the doctor, and I at the same time availed myself of the hint immediately to quit the present spot, and walk away.

It was evident, in the afternoon of the 28th of September, that the French army below were busily

making preparations to march, with a view, in point of fact, to turn our left flank, though at that time I knew not what they were about. I observed the bustle in their camp, saw the troops and baggage collecting together at their different stations, and heard the drums and bugles very distinctly. On one occasion previously, during the preceding morning, the duke came up to our brigade, and in person directed one of the guns to be pointed and fired at the columns below, whether for the purpose or not of trying its range I cannot say, however it was Lieutenant Henry Macleod's gun that was chosen on the occasion, and no farther use was made of the artillery brigade that day.

At night, having left my quarters below the hill, I bivouacked close to the guns, in a thicket a little in the rear, and lay down to rest in my clothes among the bushes, little aware that we were then on the point of commencing our memorable retreat to the lines. We might have been preparing instead, for aught I knew to the contrary, to drive the French point blank into Spain. In the first place, I had enough to do to keep up a regular supply of provisions and forage for the brigade in the field, without troubling myself about state affairs; and in the next, little enough of the movements of an army is known from common talk, even by those who take pains to enquire. Soon after I had fallen asleep I was aroused by a messenger, who awakened me in silence, and communicated the order to march instantly; and he was scarcely gone when my faithful capataz, Antonio Gomez, at hand, on the alert, and obedient to the first summons, attended to receive my orders. In a few minutes more he returned with

his brigade of mules, the greater part laden each with two sacks of forage, all ready to depart. We were at this time only a short distance, certainly less than a mile, from the great road to Coimbra, although unfortunately, part of the intervening track, through which we had now to pass, was a continuous swamp. We were in the end, I believe, actually within an ace of leaving our guns behind us; at all events, I never before nor since witnessed a more difficult or tedious operation than now succeeded, in making progress across a space only in extent perhaps four or five hundred yards. Notwithstanding the faculties of expert men, and the powers of highly conditioned horses were at command, the latter frequently straining at a dead pull scores of times in immediate succession, the carriages frequently stuck fast in the mud, without making one single inch of progress for half an hour together; in short we were the whole night at the work, that is actually not less than five hours, completing this short portion of our way. At last English determination successfully prevailed, the day broke, and the sun slanted his beams on countenances jaded by fatigue and anxiety; but it was not ere he had mounted high in the horizon, that we were out of the wood, the artillery brigade clear of its jeopardy, the men in marching order, in renewed spirits, and in perfect security proceeding along the high road leading direct to Coimbra.

The arduous duty allotted in the field to our English artillery drivers, is very great; each man, besides keeping his own clothes as clean as blacking and pipe-clay can make them, being obliged to groom and drive his own pair of horses, subject moreover to obstacles and impediments, such as cannot be

readily imagined, according to circumstances of ordinary life.

One day especially, I remember, during this retreat, I witnessed a singular instance of hardihood on the part of one of these men, on the occasion of a gun being dragged across a ploughed field, and then forced, under great disadvantages, over a ditch and bank on the opposite side, in order to regain the road. When the carriage, drawn by four horses, and driven by two postilions, was brought to the charge, the leaders leapt at once cleverly on the crown of the bank, and the wheelers also scrambled with difficulty to the same spot; but here the turn was so short, the intervening distance to the opposite hedge being only the breadth of the lane, that the leading postilion was unable to wheel round with nimbleness sufficient to fling his cattle upon their collars in time to render seasonable aid to the aforesaid wheel-horses; which latter consequently, together with the postilion, performed a summerset backwards, dragging down the other man and horses upon them, with a crash so severe and awful, that one would certainly have imagined the bones, at least, of either man or horse, to have been broken, though in fact no harm at all was done. The cause of the accident was evidently in great part owing to the wheel-horses being ridden by a man who, till the same morning, had no previous acquaintance with the cattle,—he was in fact hastily summoned to the duty, in consequence of the true postilion being wounded and sick in the rear. The latter poor fellow, at that moment a spectator of the disaster, although weakened by illness and unable to put his arms in the sleeves of his jacket, which garment was loosely fastened in front

of his chest, became immediately fired with a soldier's ardour. He requested permission of the commanding officer to be allowed to ride his horses to the charge, and literally mounting in that state, without his coat and waistcoat, and the gun being again brought to the obstacle, his judgment and courage preponderating over bodily ailments, though his fate for some seconds was as the balance of a hair, whipped, kicked, and shouted with such felicitous effect, that he forced his cattle on the top of the bank to sustain their tottering position, till all four horses pulling together, compelled the ponderous carriage to ascend.

Oftentimes, in the silent hour of night, the order to march promulgated in some peaceful village, I have paused to admire in this one little speck of a great military system, the spirit of harmony and discipline that, within the space of a few minutes, roused many human beings newly wakened from deep sleep, each to a strenuous pitch of exertion in his particular vocation, and amid the busy buzz of voices, and the trampling and neighing of horses, called our thundering brigade into motion. The summons to rise—the bugle's call to "boot and saddle," was always instantly followed by the discordant brayings of mighty mules, stifled by brief interjectional remonstrances on the part of the drivers, men and beasts hurrying together from the stables, and the tumbling of carriages sonorous as a troop of London fire-engines. Noises like these continued to fill the air with clamour without confusion, till in a quarter of an hour probably from the first blast of the bugle, the whole body were collected in one dark point of rendezvous, and silence and desolation once more

reigned in the hamlet, whence all had departed. Not even the commanding officer, in many cases, knew more than simply the direction wherein we were about to proceed, or was a whit better informed of the ultimate object of the movement than the junior subaltern under his command. It was really wonderful to witness in all parts of this army, with what unerring precision a continuous circulation of intelligence was preserved through a body so vast and subject to disturbances, as an extended line of troops in rapid motion, and how orders were invariably delivered at the exact time and place required, whether night or day, in despite of unexplored rivers, mountains, and every other natural obstacle, in a strange country. Such were the services rendered by the adjutant and quartermaster-general's departments, assisted by the corps of guides, a class of foreigners, mounted on light active horses, and exclusively so employed.

CHAPTER II.

Arrive at Coimbra—Inhabitants flying before the Enemy—A Female rescued—Manner of Life during the Retreat of the British Army—Description of two different Nights' Lodging—The Duke in Adversity—Artillery Brigade quartered at Zibreira—Advance in Pursuit of Massena—The French hard pressed—More than 200 hamstrung Donkeys—Battlefield of Sabugal—Implacable Revenge of the Peasantry on their Enemies—General Henry Mackinnon—Spanish Oxen—Battle of Fuentes d'Onor.

WHEN we arrived at Coimbra, subsequent to the aforesaid battle of Busacos, a woful picture of the horrors of war was there unfolded ; such as the Duke of Wellington no doubt had in his view, when he emphatically declared, that rather had he lay down his life than live to see the actual seat of war in his own country ; and well indeed may he who really loves this blessed land, exclaim to her peaceful, wrangling inhabitants,

“ O fortunati nimium sua si bona nôrint.”

The bridge over the Mondego, no longer spanning in silence the tranquil stream below, was now covered by crowds of inhabitants agonized by grief and terror. The people of Portugal had already been invited by the local authorities, at the suggestion of the Duke Wellington, to abandon their homes on the retreat of the allied army, to carry with them all their moveable effects, and to drive their cattle under cover of our troops to the rear ; so that we no sooner gave way on the present occasion, namely, the advance of

Massena on Coimbra on the 15th October, 1810, than the town in consequence became an awful scene of tumult. It being the object of each army first to arrive hither at the same point, all the troops were now drawing to a focus ; and as the Duke had receded from the position taken up in front of the town for the purpose of covering the retreat of the inhabitants, some regiments were necessarily obliged to halt in order that others might pass ahead to occupy their allotted position in the line of march, and all began mutually in some degree to impede each other's way. Our brigade of artillery, having halted the whole morning in the outskirts, crossed the bridge about three o'clock in the afternoon, at which time, men, women, and children, scared from their peaceful homes, were flying before the enemy. Although close to the guns ; mounted on a slender mule I felt grievously the want of a more powerful animal on this occasion ; such was the crush and impetuosity wherewith I was pressed among a crowd of poor miserable creatures on every side. Some lay down exhausted to die by the road side, others ejaculated prayers and supplications, which alas ! for the most part were utterly unheeded ; such is the degree of hardness that the heart naturally attains from the paramount importunities of duty. Already I had learnt to acquire, by the care of providing for the living, an inflexible apathy, that, with the exception of now and then giving a biscuit from my haversack, or administering a draft of water to the wounded from the stream that trickled by, compelled me to be as deaf in ordinary cases to the prayer of agony, as to the wailings of a mendicant.

In the course of the campaign, happened a few

singular exceptions, of which I could recount several, though one shall suffice, not only because it occurred on this very day, but because at another period, and in another place, as will by and by be related, I was enabled, under a similar pressing exigency, again to afford assistance in the hour of peril to the subject of the present anecdote. We had now proceeded about four or five English miles from Coimbra, when, among other numerous victims of despair, I particularly though casually remarked a female, in form and feature as lovely as I ever beheld, whose dress and appearance marked her to belong to the gentler classes of society; bereft of hope, as it appeared, and recklessly extended by the side of the road. As she raised her dark eyes on my approach, I fancied that I perceived in her air and attitude, even under the most abject misery, the graces of an elegant, high-bred woman; and in a moment imagination completed the picture of a fair tender blossom severed from its parent stock by the raging hurricane. In the few short sentences which, owing to interruptions from the crowd, I was with much difficulty able to interchange, she gave me to understand in Portuguese, that she had recently, for the first time in her life, left her home; that she was the newly married wife of a Portuguese officer, that she had two days before lost her way, that she was exhausted by fatigue and hunger; and now, she said, nothing could save her but to die; repeating at the same time the words "Eu morro," "I am dying," with such bitter emphasis, that I almost feared she was already too far attenuated to avail herself of succour. I comforted her as well as I could, and promised aid. "Tem coracaō Senhora, aqui venho

logo certamente," said I, "Take heart lady, I will presently surely return again." I then left her to return to my brigade, of which I was, fortunately for the object in view, a little ahead, and eventually, though nobody, unless those acquainted with the habits of stern denial exercised in the artillery service to applications of such a nature, and moreover the rigid disciplinarian though excellent man whom at such a critical moment I had to deal with, can imagine the trouble I had to succeed. After really earnest supplication, I obtained the sufferer a seat on one of the guns. Conveying to her the grateful intelligence, I lent the support of my arm, and conducted her out of harm's way; in short, I saw her placed upon a carriage in as easy a position as possible, where, considering her free from difficulty and danger, I left her and returned to my duty. Afterwards I had the satisfaction to learn, from those to whose immediate care she was consigned, that in the course of the day's march, she happily recognized a baggage partly belonging to her husband's regiment, and in company with countrymen and friends, had departed accordingly.

During the whole of this retreat, I continued to live with the officers of the artillery brigade, whose mess was seldom, if ever, so much disorganized, but that we contrived somehow, and somewhere, during each and every day, to assemble and sit down to dinner. Our common habitation was an ordinary round tent, wherein at night we all lay down in our clothes; and in it we sometimes dined, though frequently in the open air. When in two particular instances, and only in those two, I availed myself of appearances that seemed to offer more eli-

gible quarters for the night, it so turned out, that in one case the kindness of fortune actually proved in the end a disaster, and in the other, amounted to a complete failure; so that it were quite as well had I in both instances been contented to remain where I was. On the first of these occasions, I caused my mattress to be comfortably laid down in a house removed a mile out of the line of march, anticipating at least one sound night's rest. Accordingly, at an early hour, I undressed and went to bed, but had no sooner fallen asleep, than the greater part of the roof of the building was blown off with a violent explosion, that covered me at the same time with dust and rubbish. No wonder, that on the spot I had inadvertently chosen, contiguous to the reserve ammunition of the army, which on that very night, the duke, hard pressed by the enemy on his retreat, had issued orders to destroy, a good quarter remained unoccupied. From the silence that followed the event, I was aware it occurred from premeditated design, and therefore judging danger to be over, composed myself again to rest; nor do I at this moment know, as we marched again early the next morning, how far distant I lay removed from the point of explosion.

The other instance in question happened when we were near the lines, and I by chance obtained an excellent bed in a fine spacious house; that is to say, the bed and the dwelling, compared with such as had hitherto been allotted to me as a commissariat clerk, were entitled to the distinction; at any rate, as the brigade was about to halt the next morning, I the more readily availed myself of the contingency. At night I was ushered into a chamber

fitted up in a style of luxurious elegance that surprised me; the air was fragrant with a cloud of burnt lavender; the furniture of exquisite finish, the snowy sheets were trimmed with a broad flounce ornamented by a rich pattern of open work daintily wrought by the needle, and the bed itself of the purest down, was, rather than stuffed, if I may use the term, inflated like an air balloon. Alone, and after a hard day's work, for besides having in the morning performed a long circuit in quest of supplies, I had recourse to extra hard riding in order to communicate with my chief at head quarters, I thought, previous to lying down, of the vicissitudes of fortune, that now, treating me sumptuously in mockery, called to mind the freaks of the fairies of old, and genii, who were wont knavishly to tantalize humble people, for mere sport's sake, with the pseudo paraphernalia of magnificence; and I continued to look round and round at every article in the room, carpet, china, furniture, &c., every individual thing by turns, as if 'twere impossible to admire the whole taken together, half enough. As I became lost in contemplation, the soft misty perfume that I inhaled shed a soporific influence on the senses, in earnest of the placid sleep I was about to obtain, and the poppies of Morpheus now quickly fell on my brow, yet still I determinedly sat on the side of the bed, persisting to admire. I nodded with drowsiness, my eyes drew straws, and my head at last sank upon my chest; I started and endeavoured to rally, but resistance was vain, as I murmured in soliloquy "Now, gentle sleep, like a lover will I woo thee," and the tender bed simultaneously, and as it were sympathetically, gently rendering its sup-

port to my shoulders, like a kind mistress whispering in my ear, "and so you shall." Irresistible sleep fell upon me, and I never awoke till the morning, my feet resting on the floor in the precise attitude, unconsciously, wherein I had sat on the bed tester the night before. I started up in surprise and in my clothes, grieved at an opportunity again unlikely to recur thus needlessly lost. It was broad daylight, and I set about my business.

Even after a long intervening period I reflect with wonder upon the perfect order and precision maintained throughout every branch of the army, during this splendid movement, performed for many successive days under the grievous disadvantage of stormy tempestuous weather. With no less pleasure do I recall to my recollection the cool contemplative demeanor of the great commander, under the most trying of mortal vicissitudes, a full retreat; pelted by merciless rain, harassed, jaded, restricted to a foot's pace of his steed by the throng and pressure of the troops, yet vigorously scanning, no doubt, in thought, the fastnesses and strongholds of the mountains, and confidently mocking in anticipation the enemy in our rear. Calm, stedfast resolution was depicted on a countenance, whereon of coming events no mortal eye could read the shadows, yet cheering by its inflexibility the allied troops under his command, and inspiriting the hearts of the Portuguese. Under different and favourable auspices, whether on the morning we broke from the lines in pursuit, springing forward exultingly on his charger, and eagerly demanding of a horseman in advance, "Have you seen the enemy?" or entering the town of Toulouse, amid shouting, screaming of the multitude, and greeted by the unfolded drapeau blanc, among thousands of spectators

in the blazing moment of victory ; of all times and seasons, when to have marked that countenance in bygone days, conveys now the most impressive lesson to the mind, was during the heavy flagging hours of adversity, on that memorable retreat.

Captain Lawson's brigade of artillery, during our sojourn within the lines at Torres Vedras, was posted on the rocky heights, in an inaccessible position, above the small village of Zibreira, where, as our supplies were for the most part obtained from Lisbon while we occupied this territory, I had less interesting occupation in the performance of my duty. I for my part was heartily glad to emerge from limits so confined, when, at ten o'clock one morning, the order to march delivered to us in common with the rest of the troops, caused a generally joyful sensation. The immediate consequence of the movement was the discovery, that the sentries on the advance posts of the enemy, were figures of straw, prepared by a *ruse de guerre*, for the purpose of favouring their retreat. We had now a speedy opportunity of ascertaining the truth of previous reports of the ravages caused among the French ranks by disease and the want of provisions, and according to the accounts of the inhabitants of the deserted villages, with whom on first leaving the lines we held communication, found the same fully verified. Having proceeded to the extent only of two or three days' march in advance of our old position, at Zibreira, we halted till, all the dispositions for a general pursuit being completed, we then advanced every day in the rear of the enemy ; the number of horses, mules, and men also, that lay dead, and dying, from sheer fatigue by the road-side, being even beyond our expectation.

By dint of incessant toil alone I was enabled now

to obtain the full amount of forage allotted by his Majesty's regulations, to the horses of the brigade, being not unfrequently obliged to diverge ten or twelve miles to the right or left of the line of march, whithersoever there appeared even a moderate chance of meeting with success ; afterwards following the brigade on their march by day, or by night, by light, or by dark, and finding them as well as I could. Especially previous to the affair of Sabugal, at which period I merely visited our tent at night to stretch myself on the ground, when making a detour for the purpose of obtaining a proportion of forage expected to arrive by the commissariat mule brigades from the rear, I remember that for three successive days I ate nothing but biscuit, which, when hungry, I drew from my haversack.

At the battle of Sabugal were the enemy in good truth hard pressed on their retreat. Of this affair I was not actually a witness, although I passed over the field hardly a couple of hours after the fight was over ; but not long before, at Ponte de Murcella on the river Alva, such were the symptoms of dismay among their retiring troops, that I saw at least two hundred asses, baggage animals, maimed and destroyed, to prevent their falling into our hands, and lying thickly strewed within the compass of a very small field. A sorry return to these patient animals for former services ; and it was melancholy to observe several of the little creatures, which, for want of time the executioner had omitted to slay, standing mournfully among their murdered companions, treated even with less compassion, houghed, or hamstrung, miserable and useless for ever, the

sinew of the hough divided by a common knife. Having ridden a long distance from my brigade on the morning of the battle, on my return, I successfully fell upon their route; nevertheless, owing to the counter arrangements and doublings which always occur among troops immediately previous to coming in contact with an enemy, and most frequently continue till the event of the day is thoroughly decided, even then I lost my way; in fact, nobody with an army is able to predict, on the onset of a battle, the spot within several miles, likely to be occupied by any particular portion of the troops at its close. A commissary on such occasions must thread his way through the maze as well as he can; and this, in most instances, is no easy matter to accomplish; amid conflicting reports, chiefly of wounded men, whose information reaches at all events no farther than the point where they were hit, troops from various points meanwhile uniting suddenly, and then diverging again as quickly in many different directions. Now, once arrived at the scene of carnage, the track of dead and wounded alone, afforded sufficient clue.

Were I to swell the category of woful sights to its real extent, in describing the various scenes of battles that I have witnessed, I could readily recount, without laying stress on the memory, tales of the human form cut, torn, and pierced, in all the horrible variety to be read of in Homer; nevertheless, it will be sufficient merely to mark here and there an individual case, as I proceed in my course; and even then, I am sure it will be thought that I have said enough. In the present instance, a space

of ground consisting of several acres was thickly strewed by corpses and dead horses, as well as men mortally, others less severely wounded.

I particularly observed a fine fellow, a German rifleman, sitting, as it were reflectively, upon a fragment of rock, looking apparently with earnestness towards the ground, his right hand resting on his knee, his head reclining on his bosom. He was stupefied and insensible, supported merely by a strong-built muscular form, and his glassy eyes were sightless and fixed. Though he sat upright, life had almost fled; for a musket ball had perforated the skull, and the cold shadows of death enveloped his brow. Kind nature had applied her styptic, but in vain; the congealed blood, in form like an icicle lengthened to several inches, incessantly distilled from the wound, fast dripping in a red pool below; drops which, rather than moments, for time with him had ceased to be, served to measure the close of his existence.

A little farther removed from the above spot lay a richly dressed French officer, shot through the body, gasping for breath, and apparently in death's last agony. He was at the same time sensible, and keenly alive to the horrors of his situation; for the fallen of that day were still in their clothes, those of the enemy doomed to dreadful retribution, then too frequently inflicted by the inhabitants of this ill-fated country upon the prisoners who fell into their hands. The dying Frenchman full clearly presaged his destiny, and probably even ere another hour had passed, the short remnant of his time was added to eternity; when the inhabitants of the villages, rushing across the field of battle, as they were wont, pillaged

the enemy of their garments, and inflicted death, and perhaps unnecessary torture, on the bodies of the dying. The field of Sabugal was now strewed with the plunder and spoils of the peasantry, women's garments especially, left behind in confusion of retreat. I was proceeding on my way, and had scarcely passed the wounded man, when he beckoned me towards him, and gazing earnestly on my face, supplicated me with a dying tone and gesture to put him out of his misery. Articulating with difficulty, he said he feared not to die, but dreaded the thought of being murdered; and the Portuguese, he well knew, would cut his throat like a dog. "Monsieur," said he, with resigned determination "faites moi la grace, pour l'amour de Dieu, d'un coup de fusil dans ma tête," at the same time stretching out his arm towards a weapon on the ground, with an air so ghastly and imploring, that had it been possible to accede to his request, I should, no doubt, have performed, as regarded his temporal welfare, an act of mercy. Seriously moved by his appeal, through necessity I left him to his fate; I had no means to afford him protection, and silently passed on.

With reference to the above incident, the following anecdote will shew the comparative feeling then existing among the peasants towards friends, and inveterate enmity towards their invaders, for whose sanguinary deeds, deeply as is to be deplored the atrocity of revenge, many were the villages unroofed and annihilated, many yet in smoking ruins, and many the young and aged victims sabred in the streets, that might have palliated retaliation.

I was riding through strange roads about the time I have now been speaking, a little before or

after the battle of Sabugal, towards my brigade, while they, together with the rest of the army, were making long marches, and one evening entirely lost my way, and was benighted. Although in point of actual distance I had not more than eight or ten English miles to travel, I was so thoroughly astray, that I might probably have gone by mistake to the camp of the enemy, when I knocked at the door of a cottage by the road-side, and begged of the peasant its owner to come forth and direct me. "Certamente, Senhor," replied the man with alacrity, and without a moment's hesitation, although comfortable for the evening, he drew his brown leather boots upon bare feet, and taking his "pao," a pole seven feet long, in his hand, sallied forth straight on end from his dwelling. He now accompanied me willingly, merely from the regard he bore to my countrymen, through obscure tracks, across a moor covered with plants of cystus, walking all the while nearly at the rate of five miles an hour in front of my mule, "huma boa legoa," a distance fully equal to four English miles; and he absolutely insisted on thus continuing to render me service, even after he had explained to me my bearings, and placed me in the middle of the way. An act so friendly of a stranger, bespoke universal philanthropy, and, for my own part, I never felt more implicit confidence, than during the whole of the way in my rural conductor. I should have fared differently had I been a Frenchman!

We were proceeding across the aforesaid moor, where at a little distance from our track, stood a wind-mill. "Veja O Senhor, aquelle munho?" "Do you see, sir, yonder windmill?" said my guide. "Vejo," "I see it," said I. "Arra qu' os diabos, dos Francezes."

“ Ah those devils, the French,” rejoined he, grinding his teeth ferociously, in allusion to some recent recollection ; whereupon, seeing he had something to relate, I extracted the remainder of the history. A few evenings before, he said, he and some neighbours surprised in that very mill some French soldiers in the act of grinding corn. The door was open, and the party seeing those within at work, approached unperceived with their fire-arms and taking deliberate aim fired a volley together into the midst. Three or four, I think he said, immediately fell dead, some ran away, and others lay wounded on the floor. The latter they made prisoners alive. Then laughing loudly, in a tone of exultation, he related the savage torments inflicted on the captives. “ Fizemos huma brincadeira,” “ We made a frolic,” said he, meaning to refer to the tragedy of which he then related the detail, of which it may be as well to comprise the particulars in few words, namely, that previous to putting the unfortunate men to a lingering death, they actually cut out their tongues.

Previous to the battle of Fuentes d' Onor, fought on the 5th of May, 1811, our brigade of artillery was stationed at the village of Nave d' Aver, about a couple of miles distant from the former place. In August the previous year, at the time of the fall of Almeida, before the retreat to the lines we occupied the same post. We remained in the neighbourhood altogether several days, though I do not remember how long precisely we were there on the former occasion ; my object being merely to introduce an incident relating to a highly valued officer and truly excellent man, Major-General Henry Mackinnon, whom I there by chance met, with whom I had before passed

many agreeable hours, and one year had in fact walked tête-à-tête shooting with him every day successively nearly for the whole season. Now, under different circumstances, a commissariat clerk, I remarked anew those estimable qualities, unchanged and unchangeable, that characterize a mild, high-bred spirit. One day calling at my quarters, and proposing a walk in the country, little as was the leisure at that period at my disposal, I immediately acceded to the invitation. In the course of a lengthened ramble, wherein the conversation turned chiefly upon my personal affairs, he listened with kind and attentive interest as I related the events that had befallen me, and thence we proceeded to discuss other matters, entirely apart from the subject of his profession. Arriving at an elevated spot, a wheat field, whence appeared on every side an ample view of the landscape around, one particular object riveted his attention. The sun was then brightly shining on the lofty white walls of Ciudad Rodrigo. Removing a telescope from its sling, he looked earnestly at the fortress, without a moment's intermission for several minutes, indeed so long and intently, that I opened a portable black leather case, that commissariat officers then carried strapped round the shoulder for the purpose of containing their account-books, and proceeded to make memoranda. Still as I wrote, still anxiously he surveyed the walls, and many minutes elapsed before, even then unwillingly, he replaced the telescope. As he left the spot, his countenance was marked by deep, serious reflection; and by the inevitable decree of fate, it happened on a future day that on those identical walls, whereon he then so fervently gazed,

he was slain at the capture of the fortress, and occupied a soldier's grave.

The Portuguese peasantry hate every thing that is Spanish, whether it be living or dead—even a Spanish ox. While on the frontier of Spain, I procured some of these animals, and put them in charge of my “boiero,” or “herdsman,” who, by virtue of his office, constantly attended the movements of the brigade, drove the cattle on all occasions to the best contiguous pasture, and held meanwhile regular daily communication with me. Stately, rampant creatures though they were, coal black, with a wide-spreading horn, and far superior in breed and quality to those of Portugal, nevertheless I could easily perceive that the boiero regarded with an evil eye, and a countenance fraught with sullen national antipathy, their fiery demeanour. A gaunt, bony, uncouth man, possessing abundant clumsy strength, combined with no vast share of lathsomeness of limb or activity, the latter property was that which the foward creatures now evinced a disposition to put to the test, refusing to allow themselves to be driven away; and I left both man and beasts, the latter tails on end, roaring defiance, the former flinging about his arms in an ecstasy of fury, and venting execrations. Indeed I never saw a more forcible picture of rage and despair than was pourtrayed on this man's countenance on our next interview on the same evening, when he returned to my quarters, after having taken departure in the aforesaid mood, on his separate avocation. Puffing and blowing for want of breath, and otherwise grievously agitated, he suddenly burst into my presence, his matted black hair rough as a mop, his glowing red face covered with large drops of perspir-

ation, his “pao,” “long pole,” discoloured by mud, capote torn, and temper irritated to a furious degree of excitement. For a few seconds he was utterly unable to articulate, and when at last his imprisoned thoughts found vent, he ejaculated his words with an air of ludicrous gravity,—“Olhe, Senhor,” “Look ye, Sir,” said he, with a look of inflexible faith, devoutly crossing himself meanwhile on the forehead and bosom with his thumb, as if seriously desiring to be believed, even to the utmost limit of his phrase. “Olhe, Senhor, “aquelles verdadeiramente não estão boes, mais estão algums malditos grandes demonios.” “Look ye, Sir, certainly those are not oxen, but some great cursed devils.” And then he related, with tears in his eyes, how, cocking their tails, they galloped straight away, topping all the stone walls that stood in their course, still continuing their headlong speed; nor were they yet, he said, retaken, though pursued almóst to the last extreme gasp of himself and his Portuguese companions.

On the morning of the battle, owing to an unusual contingency, every man and horse belonging to our brigade had quitted the village of Nave d'Aver, and taken up a position on the plain, while I remained alone in my quarters asleep a full hour. I rose early, as accustomed to do,—yet every one had risen before,—as in a disturbed dream, I was belated, and all were gone. A party of French cavalry, moreover, more than once during the intervening time, galloped through the village, fortunately without exploring the recesses of my habitation. At no period during the campaign did such an occurrence happen either since or before, caused now chiefly by arriving unusually late at my quarters, having failed

to communicate with my commanding officer the evening before ; and whether in the end, the order to march arrived suddenly, or was communicated at short notice, at any rate my people departed with the rest, and left me behind.

Calling aloud, nobody returning an answer, and perceiving my baggage was taken away, an operation by the way requiring vastly little, either of time or space, instantly aware of the risk of remaining where I was, I hurried on my clothes, and seizing by the bridle my mule, which I found tied up ready saddled in the stable, mounted her and rode away. When I arrived on the middle of the plain between the village of Nave d'Aver and Fuentes D'Onor, the guns of our brigade were already drawn up there in line, pointing to what might in fact be called a thick copse or wood, about a furlong distant ; at least the ground here, generally interspersed with large cork trees, assumed that appearance. The enemy's troops, especially cavalry, were in strong force on the surrounding heights ; a degree of bustle void of confusion prevailed among the officers of the staff, and appearances on every side were indicative of an approaching conflict. The steadiness of the troops meanwhile was particularly remarkable, none indeed but an eye-witness can form an adequate notion of the extreme state of tranquil coolness of the British soldier to the last moment before going into action. Often have I witnessed a party of men stretched at their ease on the ground on the immediate eve of a battle, about to partake of probably a last earthly meal, which ceremony, as a matter of necessity under such circumstances, is frequently resorted to, conversing together in the same thoughtless

joyousness as if death were a mere fantasy, the past and future a vain dream, and as if, moreover, the whole object of present existence were to secure a share of the pottage; nay, I have literally observed him whose heart's blood was perhaps afterwards shed on the plain, rail at a clumsy companion for spilling a spoonful of gravy; and I have remarked countenances as cheerful, and heard shouts of laughter resound as merrily, notwithstanding the awfulness of the moment, as at a harvest home.

Commissariat, as well as all other army arrangements, owing to the uncertain position of affairs, being for the time in abeyance, I had disposed of my supplies and cattle so as to be ready to move at a moment's warning in any direction, and remained with my brigade close to Captain Lawson, then in command of the guns, waiting till some decisive event should happen. An aide-de-camp from Sir Brent Spencer now rode up hastily, with an order immediately to limber up and retire. Lawson, anxious for a share of the day's work, received the order in dudgeon, and as the aide-de-camp rode away "put them in cotton," said he to himself, muttering the words crustily between his teeth; at the same time, being a good soldier, he retired accordingly. At this moment I was so much interested with the present scene, for the French cavalry not only continued to collect in great force, but were actually skirmishing with ours, and repeatedly charging in the distance, that I neglected to draw a proper inference from the order I had just heard delivered, and remained on the spot where I was, after the guns had limbered up accordingly and were gone. All of a sudden, while

I was intently observing the motions of the enemy, a cannon shot from the above-mentioned wood, suddenly came whizzing through the air, and with a sound as if moving precisely in the same line where I stood, struck the ground at the distance of about thirty yards. The noise of the flying shot, and the heavy slap as it impinged on the ground, so frightened my mule, that the animal turned instantly round on her haunches as quick as a cat, and with such violence of motion, that, assisted by my ducking my head perhaps at the same time, caused my hat to fall on the ground, which I immediately alighted to pick up. Another cannon-shot quickly followed the first, striking nearly the same spot; then came another, and others in rapid succession; in short, I now found myself inadvertently in front of the British line, and under fire, I think of six guns, which continued to discharge shot without intermission from the cover of the wood. At this crisis, desirous as I was of changing my station, I was unable to persuade my perverse mule to stir an inch for the recovery of my hat, although at the moment I would readily have given the mule in exchange for the hat, or have parted with both together, so that I were at any rate once again prosperously removed from the spot. Under present circumstances there was but one thing to be done. I seized the villainous beast, one hand on the jaw, the other on the nose, and thus forced her backwards, snorting defiance, in the necessary direction. I had no sooner effected this manœuvre with success, and removed to another position, than the battle became general, and the aforesaid place that I then occupied, a principal scene of action.

Our guns had a great deal to do this day in covering the infantry, who, without such protection, would have been grievously exposed to the enemy's cavalry. As with intense interest, on that memorable morning I remained watching the destinies of friends and messmates enveloped in a cloud of smoke, collected in its dense centre, and incessantly discharging shot and Shrapnel shells among the ranks of the enemy, as if sustaining by roaring thunder, the chief brunt of the battle,—suddenly, with a tremendous explosion, a tumbril blew up. I saw a white pillar of smoke burst upwards with fearful rapidity ; I saw an inverted cone formed with instantaneous expansion, and I saw the vaporous volume then roll far away in the air, and take peaceful station among the clouds of heaven. Yet for many minutes I was totally ignorant how many of my friends and companions had attended its fatal summons. Fortunately, little mischief ensued, and the accident created no dismay ; a horse or two were killed, and one driver slightly wounded ; but the cannonade continued as fierce as ever.

After the work of the morning was over, I had the satisfaction of meeting all the officers of the artillery brigade unhurt, and moreover of congratulating them the same day in person when assembled at dinner. It was a hasty repast, consisting of cold fare spread on the ground, and since the place was a very little way removed from the field of battle, the less was my surprise on lifting a large stone, which I had chosen for the purpose of a seat, from a heap a few yards distant, when I uncovered the foot and leg of an officer, that, amputated in the morning, during the

action, there lay buried. The discovery produced not the slightest bad effect upon any body's appetite.

The whole of the next morning, as it seemed doubtful whether or not the French would recommence the attack, our troops remained steadily on their posts, and as I walked over the bed of the slain, though the dead were for the most part removed, I here remarked, for the first time in my life, in several instances, that peculiar charred and seared appearance, observable on the lacerated remains of limbs when severed by cannon-shot. Rough, as are the means whereby the cannon-ball performs its work, even though it tear away legs, arms, or thighs, yet it draws no blood; a paralysis of the heart succeeds the mighty shock, and causes the divided muscles to remain as dry as if the body were dead a week.

French cavalry horses lay dead on the ground in considerable numbers, and already numerous shoals of blue hawks, the colour of wood-pigeons, were collected in the vicinity, hovering high in the air, in eager expectation of the moment when, the troops on the ground having quitted their post, they might pounce upon their prey. Numerous troux de loups, or small round holes arranged in rows diamond pattern on the plain, each hole about the size of the outer rim of a broad hat, and deep enough to render the ground impassable to horses at speed without their falling, were here prepared by the British army for the protection of the infantry from the charge of the French cavalry. The Duke of Wellington in person and on the alert, was on the field a great part of the morning. For a long time he lay supported by his elbow on the ground surrounded by

all his staff. When I approached the spot where the party reclined in a group, the duke would now and then, raising his head, laugh and chat livelily with the rest, and again resuming his occupation, gravely read the *Gazeta da Lisboa*.

CHAPTER III.

Receive promotion—Appointed to Sir Brent Spencer's portion of the Army—Wine destroyed—Commence the March to the Alemtejo—Cattle swimming across the Tagus at Villa Velha—Forty-eight successive Hours on horseback—Put in charge of a Depôt at Alto da Chão—Ordered thence to take charge of the Depôt at Celorico—Manner of Life and Duties—Infested by Rats—Pithing Cattle—A Tame Wolf—Oxcart Transport—Misery of the indigent Inhabitants—Descent of Marmont on the Frontier of Beira—Magazines destroyed.

HAVING at length served to the extent of the period requisite to qualify me for promotion, I was gratified by obtaining it accordingly, and appointed to act as deputy assistant commissary-general, which rank was in due course conferred at home by the Treasury. The comparative grade of a commissariat clerk, as relates to the army, was at that time dubious; nevertheless, I was thereby probably exalted to the level of a lieutenant. It is extraordinary, since an intimate connexion on service prevails between the commissariat and his Majesty's troops, that the rank and privileges of the former were never clearly defined during the Peninsular campaign.

Removed from the brigade on a new service, I now bade adieu to my kind friends the officers of the artillery, being attached to a portion of the army commanded by Sir Brent Spencer, about to undertake their projected movement across the Tagus to the Alemtejo. The garrison of Almida under Gen-

ral Brennier, having already made their escape in the night, had formed junction with Massena; and this part of the allied army was now hastening to reinforce Beresford by the route of Castello Branco, Niza, and Portalegre. One morning, previous to the affair of Albuera, having according to orders caused some pipes of wine to be staved to prevent the contents falling into the hands of the enemy, we commenced our march. The wine was deposited in a chapel, and as the heads of the casks were bulged in, rushed along the road in a torrent that washed the knees of my terrified and snorting mule, an execrably slow beast, than which I at that moment longed for a fleeter quadruped; such as, switching his tail in the distance, and bearing the officer under whose immediate orders I acted, an eye-witness of their execution, I perceived on the summit of high ground full three quarters of a mile farther removed than myself from the enemy, the latter being now on the point of approaching the hollow where I stood.

As from service already performed with the artillery, I was now sufficiently versed in the mode of supplying troops in motion; although my duties were much increased, acquaintance with the routine rendered matters much more easy. Nevertheless, I chanced to undergo, especially on one particular occasion during the present movement, a great deal of hard work, on the day before and subsequent to crossing the Tagus. With a view to superintend the distribution of the cargoes of various brigades of mules converging from different points laden with provisions and forage, and afterwards proceed three or four leagues to Villa Velha, where the bridge of boats was then prepared for the

transit, having already been actively employed in outdoor occupation nearly the whole of the day, now, without taking any previous rest, I mounted my mule at eleven o'clock at night and departed. It was indispensable to start at this unseasonable hour for the sake of arriving at the Tagus by daybreak the next morning ; although, in spite of precaution, the operation of crossing with our present number of troops proved a tedious affair, our herds of cattle especially being forced by the Portuguese boeiros into the river and obliged to swim across a stream equal in breadth to the Thames at Staines. It was curious to observe the mode practised on this occasion ; for although three or four of the highest couraged creatures, by shouting and cudgelling, were actually compelled to take the water in a straight line, the object was not accomplished without sundry failures. Several times did they, moaning and roaring, turn round towards the land, whence they were as often lustily beaten away, till finding resistance utterly hopeless, they set their heads in right earnest to the opposite shore, and the remainder of the herd being driven into the water, then quietly followed.

Our cattle and laden mules being conducted safe across the river, and following the route of the troops, I had no sooner arrived at the end of the day's march at nine o'clock at night, than I received orders to return immediately to the bridge on the Tagus, whence in the morning I had started, on duty relating to other brigades of mules, of whose probable arrival at that spot notice had been since received. I accordingly remounted my mule, and crossed the mountains back again during the night to Villa Velha ; at which place, after being occupied on business for several

hours I procured a fresh animal, set forward on the road to Portalegre, and arrived a little before midnight, having been upwards of forty-eight successive hours in the saddle. One short period of sound rest, however, is to be deducted, which I obtained on the way, for on one occasion, rolling from side to side as I rode along from sheer drowsiness, during a burning hot day, and observing a chapel which cast a cool shadow on the grass below, I called a peasant towards me, gave him my mule to hold, and threw myself on the ground. Immediately I was asleep; having looked at my watch before I lay down. The period of rest prescribed was a quarter of an hour, and the peasant, faithfully awakening me at its termination, at the same time put an end to our brief acquaintance, and earned a quarter dollar.

So soon as the troops were distributed at their several posts in the Alemtejo, I was removed from my present employment, to take charge of a newly-formed dépôt of provisions and forage established at the beautiful rural town of Alto da Chão. During the period I remained here, small detachments were in continual motion, and as the business on my hands became in some particulars more extensive than before, in others altogether new, lack of experience and want of system were necessarily recompensed by harder labour. A young, active, intelligent clerk was here allotted to me, not versed in commissariat affairs, but ready to supply by good humour and industry other deficiencies. We began work in the office every morning at five o'clock, and frequently were without a moment to spare, even to take breakfast, before two in the afternoon. Within the walls of this office I passed

nearly the whole of my time at Alto da Chão, whence my recollections of the place and its vicinity, though vivid, are few. Clean and airy, it was, of all the towns it was ever my lot to reside in while in Portugal, at that time apparently the least disturbed by apprehensions of the enemy. The principal inhabitants were for the most part in occupation of their houses, and had not my own duties made me mindful of the presence of the British army, I might almost have imagined that the seat of war was in another country.

Having remained at Alto da Chão upwards of a couple of months, that is to say till the middle of August, I received orders to proceed across the Tagus towards the frontier of Beira, and there take charge of the dépôt at Celorico.

The commissariat duties of this post, owing to its advanced position towards the army, whereof it was the entrepot of all manner of stores, provisions, and forage on the route from the several points of Coimbra, Raiva, and St. João da Pesqueira ; being a central point for the organization of ox-cart transport collected from the adjacent country ; a thoroughfare for numerous detachments incessantly moving to and from the army ; and lastly, containing an extensive hospital establishment for the sick and wounded ; were at the time in question, heavy and multifarious. The fluctuation in the number of the troops quartered in the town and vicinity, for whom it was indispensable to provide daily rations, was irregular and excessive ; transport moreover was required to convey the said rations to the out-quarters in the neighbourhood ; and the continual throng of people, applicants on various other branches of service on

the one hand, and unavoidable difficulty and official delay on the other, created a press of business so grievous that my office was literally besieged, all day, every day, and for days together, like a poll-booth at a contested election. In the street opposite my house a crowd of voracious people were for ever in attendance, whose numbers, continually refreshed by new comers, increased always quite as fast, and sometimes a great deal faster than I could dispatch the old ones, notwithstanding that during the summer I usually began work at five o'clock in the morning, and allowing for the interval of dinner and a ride of a couple of miles afterwards out of the town, extended office hours till ten at night.

My own room was open to the public, that is to say, the door was never shut; and since the office of the clerks for issuing rations was immediately contiguous, a buzz of tongues and stamping of feet continually resounded in the passage. My own occupation was that of managing the wholesale receipts and issues of provisions, forage, and stores, sent by brigades of mules and bullock-carts from the rear, and consigning supplies to the field commissaries with the army. Daily returns shewing the existing state of the dépôt were regularly dispatched to head quarters, whereby the number of mules sent from the divisions, brigades, or cavalry regiments, to Celorico, was chiefly regulated, but nevertheless the transport was frequently detained two, three, or more days, waiting the arrival of consignments from the rear. Commissariat officers, when within a reasonable distance from the dépôt, would frequently ride thither to look after their loitering mules, and vie with each other in obtaining a share of the sup-

plies, which I was nevertheless compelled to equalize according to the numbers dependent on the station. A commissary arriving from the army was invariably constrained to force a passage towards my office through the crowd of capatazes and mulcteers by whom it was continually surrounded, and then screw his way with equal difficulty towards a point in the centre where I sat all day ensconced by a breastwork of tables. I had, in fact, arranged a regular line of defence fronting the door, and as far removed as practicable; but it may be necessary to give a little account of the house as well as my citadel of duty.

The town of Celorico was at this time deserted by almost all the inhabitants, except those who either had few household effects to lose, or who derived profit one way or other by their intercourse with the army; consequently the quarters allotted to me as a private dwelling and offices consisted of a large rambling house, the name of whose owner, if ever I heard it, I have totally forgotten. However, it had suffered grievous dilapidations during the previous occupancy of the enemy. The less my compunction, from its desolated appearance, in resorting to an expedient consistent with the general state of repair, and whereof I have availed myself on other occasions and in other places, on service, to obtain the luxury of a fire; for although Celorico, not far removed from the lofty ridge of mountains, the Sierra d' Estrella, covered with snow all the year round, is frequently visited in the winter by sharp frost, yet not any of the sitting rooms in the houses are provided with grates or chimneys. The mode I now took to remedy the defect, may

serve to give some idea of the condition of the dwelling to which it was applied. Simple, both in design and execution; it was merely as follows. In a corner of my parlour or dining room I nailed a small wooden batten on the floor, inclosing between the two walls a triangular space, whereupon I spread a compost of mud, lighted a fire, and knocked a hole in the ceiling above to let the smoke out through the upper windows.

On taking possession of the aforesaid office, which was a room on the ground floor, it was not only applied to purposes of business, but, being provided with a small adjoining recess, served on my arrival at the station for a dormitory, and there, in fact, I might have continued to sleep, if not at last fairly driven away by the rats. A flour store immediately contiguous to the chamber, not only caused them to congregate in extraordinary numbers, but they became so bold that I have literally, on their making their appearance while I sat writing among a crowd of people in the middle of the day, not unfrequently requested persons to stand aside, and with a horse-pistol, previously loaded for the purpose, killed two or three at a shot. The nuisance created by the vermin at night was really dreadful; like dogs they galloped round the room squeaking and fighting one with another, and not contented with running over me as I lay in bed, at last absolutely used my person as a convenient landing-place to drop upon from the ceiling to the floor. The latter liberty being quite unbearable and startling me to boot; and since mortal patience could sustain it no longer, I resolved to have recourse to poison, and laid baits accordingly in different parts of the room for several succeeding nights, which

being tasted and approved, I afterwards mixed with arsenic. It were quite impossible to describe the wheezing, spitting, sniffing, and coughing that succeeded the deadly repast; indeed, I for some time lay awake listening, really astonished to believe such sounds could possibly proceed from animals so small; to say nothing of certain other noises, the effect of indispositon, whereto, from their extreme peculiarity, I will only cursorily allude; suffice it to say that their internal organs were affected in every possible way. Notwithstanding the success of the enterprise, whereby at any rate near a score the next morning were picked up dead in the room, and many wandering comatose, and paralytic, accordingly destroyed, the enemy, notwithstanding their loss, repaired their ranks by fresh reinforcements, and in ten days' time were as audacious as ever; collecting in small droves behind trunks and boxes against the wainscot of the room, and bolting across form one ambuscade to another on their way to their holes,—during which latter movements I took occasion to kill them with a pistol, as I said before.

As regards business, my dwelling, at all events, was in a centrical situation,—for the slaughtering place of the cattle, consisting of a large open space, whereon from twelve to twenty head for the use of the dépôt were killed every morning, was under my office windows; the butchers' store too was in a contiguous outhouse, part of the same building. The cattle are pithed by the butchers, as is well known in Portugal. For my part I abstained as far as practicable from sanctioning the practice, preferring, from mere motives of humanity, the English way; in fact, the rolling and quivering of the eye-

balls, the tremulous spasms of the rigidly stiffened limbs, and altogether the horrid contortions produced, through the agency of the nerves, on the prostrate beast by pithing, are really dreadful to behold. Without dwelling longer on a disagreeable subject than is absolutely necessary, let the uninformed reader, in order to understand the operation, placing his finger on his pole or node of the neck, as it is sometimes called, in that small cavity just under the protuberant part of the skull, imagine his chin violently thrust downwards in contact with his breast, and then a dagger driven into the aforesaid cavity to the centre of the forehead, pointblank through his brains.

While thus I laboured day after day at the receipt of custom, one personage attendant upon the household, invariably one of the crowd never by any accident out of the way, I have omitted to mention—a tame, full-grown, female wolf, so perfectly domesticated and well known as to be little feared, chained at the door, in such a position that no individual, whether great or small, could enter the office and approach the table where I sat without absolutely stepping over her back. I procured the animal, a whelp a few days old, from a peasant then about to destroy it with the rest of the litter, at Alto da Chão; and having at the same time attached to my baggage a puppy of a large breed, somewhat older, both animals became on the most friendly terms and grew up together; wherefore, I am enabled literally to assert, that I have ridden through the streets of a town with a wolf at the heels of my horse. Such was literally the case on more than one occasion; nay more, the dog—a tall, stump-tailed, black and tan animal,

half terrier half mastiff—and wolf accompanied me both together two miles from and back again to Celorico, whether it be that the wolf was allured by the society of the dog, or that the act as regards the former be construed into following me.

The habits of a domesticated wolf bear close affinity to those of the dog; unlike the cowardly cringing fox, prone to hide itself in holes, the wolf displays bold sportive tricks, gallant bearing, and noble demeanour. But the wolf is the savage, the fox the knave, the dog the gentleman; like a man whose interest is thoroughly excited, so the wolf, his appetite once roused, acts according to his nature. This animal, when loose, galloping playfully round in circles, leaping, bounding, and flourishing her tail like a hound or Newfoundland dog, testifying moreover recognition of her master, laying her paws on my shoulder and even licking my face; yet the moment a leg of mutton appeared on the table, neither friend nor foe dared interfere or prevent her from immediately making the prize her own.

A ludicrous instance of this vivid untameable impulse of a beast of prey one day occurred, while the creature was lying apparently asleep among the feet of a crowd of Spanish muleteers. One of these men brought into the office a sheep's pluck, which he held by the windpipe. As the man strode across the wolf's back, the latter, smelling the meat then dangling in front and concealed under his cloak, without a moment's hesitation dashed her nose upwards from behind under the back part of his garment, voraciously seized the gory morsel, and pulling it backwards between the owner's legs from the front, caused the

utmost disturbance and alarm. Although the floor was immediately covered with blood, just as if the wolf had seized the man, the Spaniard, anxious to preserve his property, held on in despite by the windpipe aforesaid, till the wolf, evincing uncompromising ferocity, in a few seconds tore all away.

I once unintentionally subjected a military friend to serious apprehension, and constrained him to exercise his tactics in self-defence, by inadvertently failing to recommend the inoffensive habits of the animal to his previous notice, on the occasion of his taking up his quarters at my house for the night on his route to the army. After dinner and office hours were over, I caused a matress to be spread for his accommodation on the floor of the dining room, when, bidding him good night, and remaining occupied in my own office barely sufficient time to allow a tired traveller to compose himself to sleep, I went to my own apartment. I had previously done as I was wont, namely, slipped the wolf's collar and let her loose, to allow the poor animal the range of the empty rooms and passages of my large straggling house till the morning, for the benefit of exercise. By my friend's account in the morning, he was grievously alarmed during the whole night by her proceedings, thinking she had broke loose by accident and meditated an attack; he was, he said, entirely despoiled of his rest by his own precautionary measures, and the sounds incessantly produced by the enemy, as she not only trotted restlessly to and fro, but at least once in every two or three minutes scratched and snuffed at his door.

Notwithstanding the good qualities above related, in the end I was obliged to have this wolf destroyed;

for the change occasioned by the season of the year wrought a fearful alteration in her temper, that manifested itself in an unusual, unaccountable, and sudden wildness. I narrowly escaped being bitten, and a cat, which she was accustomed to play with and fondle, was particularly unfortunate ; for approaching to pay its devoirs according to ordinary custom, in one moment the wolf seized poor puss in her jaws and crunched every bone in the body. Fearing worse consequences, I immediately had the culprit shot.

* * * * *

The organization of the native ox-cart transport, whereby a number usually amounting to a couple of hundred vehicles or thereabouts were sustained effective at the station by dint of continually stimulating the local authorities, through the aid and vigilance of the chiefs of brigades or conductors, formed at this time an important branch of my duty. The time of one Portuguese clerk was entirely taken up in writing letters to the several magistrates or their deputies. I held at this time between fifty and sixty in continual correspondence, whom it was necessary to urge incessantly to furnish the quota allotted to their several comarcas. These magistrates or persons in authority usually dispatched from their homes the owners with their ox-carts three or four together ; and on their arrival at the station, the latter being told off till the numbers amounted from a dozen to twenty, were brigaded and placed in charge of a chief called the conductor, who accompanied them laden with biscuit and forage to the army. Returning after their allotted service they were paid in hard dollars, permitted to return to their homes, and their places filled up by

fresh arrivals, until, according to regular routine, it became their unhappy lot to be again drafted for duty, and compelled by the presiding magistrate to leave their unprotected dwellings on a similar journey.

During the whole period of my peninsular service, I never experienced a more painful effort of duty than in this intercourse with the poorer inhabitants, to turn a deaf ear to misery and supplications urged in behalf of their cattle with heart-rending simplicity. But the necessities of the army were imperative, and the sinews of this unfortunate country strained till near snapping asunder. How the poor people preserved their cattle alive in those hard times and on those journeys, considering that with animals previously weakened and exhausted they were sometimes absent for a week or ten days together, taking with them as fodder merely a few bundles of Indian-corn straw, and this for sustenance along a tract, long since as barren as the deserts of Arabia, now that the days are past, and I reflect at leisure, I literally do not know. "Nao podem, senhor, nao podem," "They are not able, sir, they are not able," they would, alas, too frequently exclaim. "Coitadinhas estao vaccinhas, senhor," "Poor little creatures, sir, they are small cows;" and thus they would piteously entreat till the tears ran down their sunburnt cheeks.

It is the province alone of an eye witness to describe a country once unfortunately the seat of war; awful realities that afford no comparison whatever with ordinary grievances; when over a desolated territory the local government becomes inert and paralyzed, when the noble and the wealthy fly from their

domain, and when forward adventurers, possessed of temporary sway, usurp and arm themselves with legitimate power, and among all these evils the accumulated weight of suffering falls on the indigent, the poor, patient, industrious husbandman, who remains at his home not having whither else to flee, and whose yoke of oxen are inevitably pressed, because, being his all, they are with himself to be found. Every country, no matter where, is a paradise, compared to the soil where thus, like young wheat under the feet of vigorous wrestlers, the weak and lowly, by the struggles of contending armies, are crushed and rooted from the land.

In forming these general arrangements at the dépôt of Celorico, subservient to the exigencies of the army in the field, even at the best of times, and under the pressure of ordinary business, I sustained frequent impediments. Sometimes clerks, overcome by excessive fatigue, went for the recovery of their health to the rear; on one occasion the station became a point of incursion of the enemy; and at another time the garrison was assailed by a virulent fever. Day after day, for several successive weeks, great numbers of the troops fell victims to the epidemic visitation; corpses were hourly carried by my door to a confined plot of ground a few hundred yards distant for the purpose of interment; and finally, so many were there necessarily buried within a small space, that the wolves, allured to the spot at night to scratch for the remains, descended continually from the mountains. So soon as the aforesaid fact was known to have taken place, immediate measures were adopted to prevent its recurrence; however, I saw previously one place where the earth had

been newly torn up, and the foot of a dead body completely gnawed off. Not only was the station now afflicted by this malignant distemper, but the quarters, inadequate to the numbers of sick, were full to overflowing, and yet more invalids from the army incessantly continued to arrive.

The other instance of embarrassment above alluded to took place during the military operations between the allied army and Marshal Marmont, in the summer of 1812, on the occasion of the incursion made by the latter on the frontier of Beira, whereby the resident military authorities at Celorico were all driven out of the town, and the commissariat and ordnance magazines destroyed, to prevent the supplies therein contained from falling into the hands of the enemy. Precautionary measures were previously adopted in anticipation of such a disaster; combustibles even deposited in the magazines, so disposed that the whole contents might be ignited at a moment's notice, and preparations by all the resident authorities undertaken for departure. Vague and for the most part gloomy reports meanwhile arrived in the town by one channel or another, sufficient to keep all persons concerned in a disagreeable unsettled state of excitement. For my own part, little as might be the credit due to the same, I not only passed a full week in a state of irksome suspense, but without a moment's relaxation from the usual heavy press of business. The pains of preparation were not in the sequel thrown away.

The sun was I think about three hours above the horizon, on a beautiful summer's evening, when the first indications of the disaster appeared on the road to the town of Guarda towards the summit of

the elevated land four miles distant from Celorico, whence a vast crowd of people seemed hastening on their way towards the latter town, bearing no appearance of troops, but rather of peasantry going to a fair, continually replenished meanwhile in numbers from the verge of the horizon, and distributing themselves to the right and left along the open country till road and fields together exhibited the unquestionable picture of troops retreating in dismay and a terrified population. The Portuguese militia, some thousands strong, commanded by Colonel Trant, newly levied, raw troops, unused to contact with the enemy, though none when organized and well disciplined than the Portuguese are braver, now on this particular occasion, on the advance of Marshal Marmont absolutely ran like sheep. The streets in the outskirts of Celorico were speedily blocked up by flying soldiers, and the whole town was in an uproar.

The object of every militia-man seemed only to run without looking behind him, the main current of the crowd pointing in the direction towards Lamego, whither all directed their course in the utmost disorder. Colonel Trant meanwhile and his staff having arrived, and taken advantage of open space, now every moment becoming more impeded by obstacles of every description, did all that words and energy could effect to rally the men. Such, however, was the panic that the most strenuous efforts were in vain ; and thirty or forty rank and file were no sooner formed than some continually took advantage of the confusion and bolted away as fast, and generally faster, than threats and entreaties prevailed on others to fill up the vacancies.

The military commandant together with the few troops that composed the garrison, had some time since departed on their way towards Coimbra; the sick, at that time fortunately few, were even previously removed; the present was a spectacle of irretrievable confusion, no reinforcements could possibly arrive, and the enemy were apparently advancing rapidly towards Celorico, when I received orders from my senior officer to set on fire the magazines. Nothing therefore now remaining to perform previous to departure than to put the said order in execution, I repaired accordingly to the chapel which contained our supplies, and causing a flaming torch to be applied to the straw and faggots wherewith several puncheons of rum, purposely interlaced with the less combustible articles, were surrounded; the vessels quickly burst by the heat, the contents rolled onward in a liquid lake of flame, the roof of the building and all within was seized by the devouring element, the red sky, for now night had set in, told the tale far and wide in the distance, and Marmont read by its reflected glare the partial success of his enterprize.

The ordnance stores, destroyed nearly at the same time, were in like manner deposited in another chapel a mile distant on the Guarda road, of which edifice, so severe was the explosion, that, as I had afterwards an opportunity to observe, not one stone literally was left resting on its fellow, nor other remaining token of the devoted building, than a deep quarry, whence even the heavy blocks that formed the foundation were hurled far away. Roof, walls, and contents of a solid structure of sound masonry, all now were gone; a splendid ash-tree, growing con-

tiguous, stood shivered to atoms; a trunk, at least four feet in diameter, riven and torn asunder, was now a jagged lacerated stump nearly level with the ground, and stones, some half a ton weight and more, lay scattered at a distance on the earth, covering in every direction the adjacent fields, like tender apple blossoms in a gale.

CHAPTER IV.

Put in charge of the Third Division of the Army—Report myself to Sir Thomas Picton—Arduous Duties with the Third Division—Absurd Anecdote related of a Commissary by a Contemporary—Observations thereon—General Picton—Battle of Vitoria.

HAVING resumed the duties of the station of Celorico subsequent to the above related event, matters remained tranquil on the frontier till the beginning of May, 1813, when, on the projected advance of the allied army through Spain, I received instructions to proceed to Momento da Beira, to undertake the commissariat charge of the third division. With as much dispatch as practicable I accordingly arrived at my destination a few days previous to the 16th of the same month, on which day the army broke from its winter cantonments, Sir Thomas Picton having arrived in the interval at Momento da Beira, from leave of absence in England. The general, on resuming his command in Portugal, found the troops so perfectly equipped for the intended movement in all matters of military detail, that in point of fact he had nothing to do but mount his charger and put himself at their head.

On personally reporting myself to my new commander, he received me with gracious but austere demeanour ; however, many other matters besides the

affairs of my department then necessarily occupied his attention. Slowly pacing to and fro on a solitary spot in front of his quarters, he soliloquized as he walked, and occasionally, as it were in accordance with his thoughts, brought a hand-whip in gentle contact with his boot by a round flourishing sweep of his right arm as he swung round on his heel. He merely enquired the present state of the supplies, and bade me, with reference to the ensuing movements, wait upon him every morning with a written report stating the period of supply, and the entries, issues, and remains of provisions in store.

At this time Picton's troops consisted of one Portuguese and two English brigades, the two latter each provided with supplies by an officer of the British commissariat, the former by a Portuguese commissary. A commissariat clerk also had charge of the brigade of artillery, which for some time, indeed till after the battle of Vitoria, accompanied the division. About seven thousand rations of provisions, besides forage for the animals, were required for our daily supply on that day and during the subsequent period when, the troops being provided with three days' biscuit in their haversacks, the third division broke from cantonments on the 16th of May, as aforesaid, and commenced that memorable series of operations, for which Picton subsequently received the special thanks of the British House of Commons, and in relating part of the detail in letters to a friend in England expressed himself in the following words. "The rapidity of our movements, will, I conceive, have given you all no small degree of astonishment in England. . . . During these operations

we marched thirty-four days without a halt, and for several days through muddy roads up to our knees." —Robinson's *Life of Picton*, Vol. II. p. 188.

Since the general reader is probably unacquainted with the avocations of a commissariat officer in charge of a portion of the army during its operations in the field, it may not be considered irrelevant here to sketch briefly the outline of one average day's work, such as may be fairly received as a specimen of ordinary duty while the troops were performing forced marches every day. A regimental officer, provided he be not absent on *picquet*, or visiting his guards, at the conclusion of the day's march, at ten or eleven o'clock in the morning, having absolutely nothing to do, proceeds accordingly to make himself comfortable; subject, it is true, to a few of the minor troubles of life, such as wet clothes with no tidings of the expected baggage, or a hungry belly with the certain knowledge that the tired ox, before eaten at dinner, must limp six miles farther to be killed. But the commissary, on the contrary, so soon as the troops halt, has only that very moment determined the central point of action, whence his labours begin. And this brings me accordingly to my starting post. When I waited upon the General, according to my previous instructions, every morning at three o'clock, he was always dressed, booted, and spurred, sometimes even ready to mount his horse, though generally at his breakfast. Especially for the first few days, these interviews were sufficiently brief, and his questions relating wholly to the state of our supplies, invariably delivered in an austere tone; however, he disregarded trifles, and spoke only

on material points of duty. On my part, I was invariably informed of the place, town, or village whereon we were about to march, the head-quarters of the division, and as nearly as possible the destinations of the respective brigades. Returning now to a tent, which I occupied invariably rather than a house, for the convenience of locality, preferring moreover a certain resting place to losing time in seeking a quarter, I usually found a score or more persons of various descriptions waiting my arrival. In fact, the said tent was no sooner pitched every day than office hours began, and thus early every morning those of the inhabitants not having presented their accounts for settlement the day before, were now in attendance, and the clerks hard at work in their behalf. In case it were impracticable to settle with all the claimants, the remainder were necessarily subject to the inconvenience of completing in our company another day's march. The brigade commissaries came hither also to know the General's movements as related to their respective brigades, and for the purpose of jointlyconcerting measures to obtain supplies ; it being indispensable to determine previously the country to be traversed so as not to interfere with and mutually impede each other.

The distribution of labour on these occasions was farther divided among other subordinate persons, so that no part of the country through which we passed might remain unexplored. The other individuals interested to obtain a share of each coming day's work were the chief herdsman, entrusted with a drove of from two to five hundred head of cattle attached to the division, and the several capatzes or chiefs of

brigade of the Spanish mule transport, of which our number amounted to upwards of three hundred effective mules permanently employed; and then all parties, so soon as these matters were adjusted, took leave for the day, and proceeded to their several destinations. If perchance we met again through accident in our morning's cruise, I shall not readily forget the straightforward earnestness of demeanour, the red hot and anxious, or blank and jaded expression that invariably marked each countenance in accordance with the precise degree of success attendant upon the morning's enterprise. Without intermission, as day after day arrived the troops continued to advance, while the mule transport, our main stay and support throughout the whole campaign, became gradually less effective from fatigue. The brigades became jumbled together, some of the animals lagged exhausted in the rear, and small numbers were unavoidably and continually detached to work on different parts of our line.

Full often have I risen in a morning, even while the clouds were pouring rain, and started on my way, without figure of speech or exaggeration, literally not knowing the precise direction whither I was about to go, to seek the identical wheat, that before the sun set at night was afterwards converted into bread. Yet, good fortune and the cordial co-operation of my brother officers in the commissariat, always enabled me in due time to furnish my seven thousand rations *, and thus pay, as it were, to the whole division, at

* 10,500 lbs. of bread, or 7,000 lbs. of biscuit; 7,000 lbs. of meat; 7,000 pints of wine, or 2,333½ pints of spirits.

the close of each toilsome day, the debt that I owed. Even after the wheat was found, a great deal remained to be done; for instance, the banks of rivers to be explored in seeking mills, mules appointed to work between these and the division, a spot determined on for a store to receive the flour when ground; and lastly, the municipal authorities to be summoned, the ovens in the town or village put in requisition, and women appointed to bake the flour into bread. Since it frequently happened, that arriving by a route circuitously swerving from the line of march, I had no means of removing the wheat collected on the way, till arrived at the division, different parties of mules were accordingly thence dispatched in requisite numbers, and thus set to work to travel to and fro in various directions.

A chapel or other large building on these occasions was now appropriated as a bread store, and a functionary employed, pen or pencil in hand, to deliver to the several women appointed by the alcalde to bake the flour each in the oven of her own dwelling, their several proportions. I generally found a dull heavy man best answer the purpose of a vocation, where strict attendance was required hour after hour among these lively Spanish females, and there such an individual would patiently exert his utmost mental powers, in the exercise of suitable accuracy to note in a small narrow book each and every singular delivery; that is to say, so many pounds of flour to Maria, and Josepha, and Joaquina, and so forth; and then again with a cough and a per contra he would allow the same fair individuals credit for the bread returned. So that the division no sooner found its resting place

for the day, than if the mills and mules worked well, appearances of business were speedily rife in the village. Some women would bring bags, others carried flour away in their aprons; at any rate, when sufficient time had elapsed, they returned again laden with bread, wending their way one after another like emmets on a lawn. Meanwhile the grave personage in the store, uninterrupted by their coming or departure, with saturnine aspect, and countenance unmoved by the clatter of women's tongues, and the glitter of black eyes, continued steadily to note his receipts and deliveries, till the heap of flour in one corner of the building becoming exhausted, the corresponding mountain of bread in the other corner arrived at its proper dimensions; and notice being then given to the sergeants of the regiments that the full complement was ready, they attended for their daily supply, and fetched it away.

To expedite the delivery of what had already cost so much labour to obtain, commissariat transport, as I have hinted before, was not unfrequently applied; and as the various bodies of men, forming a part of the third division, lay extended on a line stretching perhaps from right to left over a distance not less than five miles, frequently the evening closed before the patient mules appointed to this particular service were laden and dispatched.

Office business was generally established in our new territory some time before the aforesaid arrangements were perfectly set on foot; for even when the clerks remained working on the spot where we had passed the night, a couple of hours after I had departed in a morning,—even then, with very rare ex-

ceptions, they had previously arrived. Short was the time however at present to be devoted to sedentary occupations in my own tent, in fact I was unable to remain more than a few minutes, to make such hasty arrangements, as might be practicable in the way of dispatching a load of business sufficient fairly to claim the attention of as many hours; but the paramount object of the service being to collect supplies, I mounting a fresh horse traversed the adjacent country to seek what fortune might throw in my way. While the army were moving, I returned from these daily excursions to the camp generally after nightfall; I never threw myself in my clothes to rest on my matress before midnight; and always at three o'clock in the morning, as I have stated before, stood in the presence of the general.

The above is no more than a reasonable sketch of the routine of daily duty of a commissariat officer in the field, in charge of a division of the army; such I believe as was performed in common by all with equal alacrity; and appreciated I hope to a proper extent by the several commanders. Of the services of the commissariat as a body, though a member of the department, I will at any rate venture to assert, that they contributed at least a full share towards the successes of the campaign;—nor can I allow to pass uncontradicted in this place, an unnecessary and unjust anecdote introduced gratuitously in a late work, which if it were true, is calculated to stigmatize that department in his Majesty's service to which I have the honour to belong, to arraign Sir Thomas Picton, by the pen of his own biographer, and even to throw censure on the Duke of Wellington. Before I dispose of

the same, I hope satisfactorily, but at any rate briefly ; I will first take leave to quote the passage alluded to in the author's own words.

" The following anecdote has been reported of Sir Thomas Picton : during the Peninsular war, when provisions were rather difficult to be obtained, a young and dandified commissary had been instructed to supply the rations for the third division at a given place by a certain time, but by some mismanagement this officer forgot to fulfil his engagement, and the division was in consequence left to its own resources, which were bad enough. A report of the neglect was brought to General Picton, and he forthwith sent for the commissary. ' Well, Sir,' commenced Picton as he came in, ' where are the rations for my division ? ' This being the very question that the commissary was not prepared to answer, he hesitated for a short time, and then stammered out some well-worn excuse. Picton was not, however, to be cajoled by excuses while his men were kept with empty stomachs ; so he led the alarmed commissary to the door, and pointing said, ' Do you see that tree ? ' ' Yes, Sir,' was the reply. ' Well now,' continued Picton, ' if you don't get the rations for my division at the place mentioned by twelve o'clock tomorrow, I will hang you up there at half-past.' He was then released, when he proceeded forthwith to Lord Wellington and told him, with an appearance of injured dignity, of General Picton's threat ; but the commissary was dreadfully alarmed when his lordship coolly remarked, ' Ah ! he said he'd hang you, did he ? ' ' Yes, my lord.' ' Well, if General Picton said so, I dare say he will keep his word. You'd better get the rations up in time.' Further advice

was unnecessary, the rations were there to the moment."—*Robinson's Memoirs of Picton*, Vol. II. p. 390.

Considering that although dates are omitted, I am in no slight degree identified with the times, places, and persons cited in the above tale, it were sufficient, perhaps, to meet it with a peremptory denial; but, since it is related with an air of plausible accuracy,—descending even to minute particulars, such as how the individual in question looked, what he said, what he did, and absolutely how he felt,—calculated to impart to a silly fabrication undue weight and currency, I will not only say that the story is altogether untrue, and that it is untrue I most explicitly declare; but I will go farther, and even shew, at least to any person inclined to bestow a moment's consideration, that it is really not credible. The biographer of Sir Thomas Picton, meanwhile, will no doubt be thankful that I thus take the liberty courteously to expose the inaccuracy of the aforesaid passage in his work, since I vindicate the subject of his own memoir from the charge of contemplating an act of felony, and rescue from equally unjust imputation two other parties.

Now the commissary, even with cause of complaint such as alleged, which however I deny, must have preferred the same indispensably through his own chief, Sir Robert Kennedy, and not direct to the Duke of Wellington; the latter mode, stated to have been selected, being unheard of in military routine, and impossible to be put in execution. With regard to Picton, who possessed unquestioned and unquestionable moral and physical courage, aided by a sound vigorous understanding, the specimen of gasconade wherewith he here stands identified by his biogra-

pher, is totally foreign to his nature, and he could not, subject though he was to frequent outbreaks of passion, thus circumstantially have uttered a threat, that he so notoriously dared not to perform. And of the Duke of Wellington, it will be sufficient lastly and simply to observe, that never did he, as has here been described, truckle to the haughty violence of Sir Thomas Picton, or thus with wanton flippancy of tongue refuse to afford redress to an injured officer under his command.

It is a pity that Sir Thomas Picton's biographer has thus inadvertently suffered himself to fall into a literary error, merely by omitting to take the slight pains to consult officers of the commissariat, who, on matters of their own department, if applied to, would have readily afforded him information.

Although my intercourse with Sir Thomas Picton was confined to business and duty, I had frequent opportunities of observing traits of his character and temper. The latter, I fear, even his friends must confess, though softened at times by a benevolent disposition, was furious in the extreme. He had a generous heart,—but a quick perception of right and wrong actually blunted his sense of mercy, through an anxious desire to administer justice; and in fact, it was ever his delight, during the advance of the troops, not only to maintain rigid order throughout his own division, but, with the provost marshal at his heels, to extend the limits of his authority. He was craving of power, as appeared at a glance by his demeanour, and was no less clearly observable in his voice and gesture. By every impulse of his body as it were, he trampled on space, and if only an arm or a leg were to

be stirred, it was performed in a circle. "Well, Sir," for even in the midst of his wrath, he would at times suddenly change his key and condescend to be jocular, "Well, Sir," he would perhaps exclaim sonorously after three days' pouring rain to some half-drowned diffident looking person, "I suppose, Sir, you begin now to think we have rainy weather," and the chilly-faced individual would, as in duty bound, smile respectfully, and say, "Yes, Sir Thomas," "No, Sir Thomas," or "Certainly, Sir Thomas," just as the case might be. To this sort of communion Picton, in his hours of relaxation, to say the least, was not averse; and he delighted, like a swan upon a canal, to elevate his crest among minor fowl. In my humble opinion he carried with him, whithersoever he went, the impress of a person of arbitrary spirit, to whom the associates of his youth had permitted paramount ascendancy.

Over passion he occasionally exercised rigid control, even glancing with surprising rapidity to opposite extremes, and I have more than once witnessed, within the lapse of a few seconds, a total change from fury to good humour. An instance of this peculiar trait of disposition occurred, I remember, at one of those periods when under, as at times he was wont to be, the galling influence of an atrabilious temperament, and when, like a famished lion, he was angry and vexed with every thing about him. I was one day struggling hard against appalling difficulties in the way of procuring supplies, which were after all only obtained, to use a common phrase, from hand to mouth, when unfortunately I was driven to the extremely disagreeable necessity of seeking an interview with the General. The troops were at the

same time on their daily march across the broad fertile plains of Spain, where, on both sides as far as the eye could reach, an ocean of wheat waved its ripening ears in the wind, as the sweeping breeze caused the vast expanse extending all round in a continuous, unbroken circle, without the intervention of a single tree or shrub in any direction, even to the verge of the horizon, to undulate like the waves of the sea. Although the present was an irksome effort of duty, namely, to approach the General in one of his furious moods, I nevertheless pursued my course as fast as I could to the front, sometimes threading my way slowly through the troops, and then breaking off occasionally to ride on one side, for an hundred yards together, through the standing corn. The General, as usual, was riding at the head of the column when, just as I approached, progress, which had some time since been impeded very considerably, now, by collision with the baggage of another division, that pointedly interfered with our line of march, was blocked up altogether. Such an event of all others always put Picton in a fury, and when, on the present occasion, I first descried him, whether or not now as usual attended by the provost marshal, he was at any rate gratuitously exerting his utmost strength in the performance of that officer's duty, and vigorously inflicting chastisement on an offending soldier. Whether the man disregarded his orders, had uttered an insolent reply, or whatever was his dereliction of duty, Picton lashed him violently across head and shoulders, bringing his horse on his haunches, wheeling round, flogging and cutting without a moment's intermission, as the man mean-

while dodged, held down his head, and defended his face by his elbows. When sheer want of breath at last obliged him to desist, I thought I had never seen a fellow get a severer horsewhipping. So soon as I saw the precise nature of the General's occupation, I would readily have turned my horse round unperceived, and ridden to the rear; however, the crowd was too great to move one way or other. I therefore necessarily remained where I was to the close of the ceremony.

At last Picton having thrown himself, puffing and blowing, back in his saddle, turned round suddenly, and saw me sitting steadily on horseback awaiting his pleasure. In an instant, notwithstanding that his deportment had been for several previous days invariably austere, and that at the present moment he was pale and foaming at both corners of his mouth from fury, the moral sense effected a sudden and wonderful metamorphosis; insomuch that, in accosting me, he assumed a tone and gesture actually of overwrought civility, accompanied even with a profuse display of low bows and smiles.

For my own part, as relates to the more early portion of my intercourse with Picton, so long as he restricted his tongue to decent language, which, sooth to say, was not always the case, I was content to endure the withering vengeance of his frown, and be treated day after day with coldness and hauteur. As I grew used to him I liked him better, for good qualities occasionally broke forth through a rough exterior, and I heard related of him, as regarded others, instances of grateful recollection.

In one case, and in one alone, we fell into serious collision; that of my interference in behalf of an

officer under my orders, who had just cause to complain of his harsh treatment. It will be here sufficient for my purpose merely to state that Picton received, on this occasion, a remonstrance delivered in a state of feelings much excited and unreservedly, without making any reply ; as if it were his wish to allow matters to remain as they then were. Pressed still farther, he appointed an interview with the injured party, and a place and hour for a hearing ; nevertheless, although the appointment was accordingly kept, he himself, and I have no doubt pre-meditatedly, remained absent ; nor did he ever again allude in the most remote terms to a circumstance for which his silence served as an explanation. At all events, I received it as the expression of his desire that the affair should proceed no further. Thus interpreting his silence, I thought it my duty to allow the complaint to drop, and it dropped accordingly.

I have purposely, for obvious reasons, avoided entering further into particulars, merely wishing to shew imperfectly, in this place, though more will be said on the subject hereafter, that Picton, watchful over his ardent spirit, was ever anxious to redeem, and even with the candour of an exalted mind, atone for an error.

The first time I ever happened to see the General in a truly benevolent humour, was on hearing of the fall of Burgos. I had the good fortune to communicate to him the intelligence, and thenceforward fancied I perceived an almost total relaxation of that feeling on his part which, so far as regarded myself, amounted I believe to nothing more, after all, than (since I had been appointed to the charge of his division during his absence in England, without his

being consulted) a sort of natural antipathy, incident to all the animal creation, towards a stranger. On the day in question, after the arrival of the division at the end of the day's march, Picton rode to head quarters in order to obtain an interview with the Duke of Wellington. The Duke was absent, bringing afterwards home I believe with himself the important intelligence; it was not at any rate communicated to Picton, who returned in dudgeon. Having heard the news at head quarters a little after Picton's departure, I galloped hastily back—at least for once in my life, anxious to overtake him on the road. At this time, not having probably more than half a day, or a quarter of a day's supply of bread to report, when I accosted him riding slowly along with a lowering countenance, which reflected even a still darker shadow by the thoughts of a long weary ride undertaken backwards and forwards to no purpose, I felt quite sure that now, to whatever question he might choose to propose I had an answer to please him. "What have you done to-day, Sir?" said he in a stern tone. "Burgos is blown up, Sir," I replied. "What, Sir, Burgos blown up?" he repeated; at the same time rearing himself erect on his saddle with enlivened tone and gesture;—for as King Joseph had destroyed the citadel, abreast of which we were, there was now an end to the anticipation of a halt in the neighbourhood, and pursuit of the enemy was certain; the French, in fact, were henceforward indisputably driven to full retreat. When I told him the enemy were certainly gone, and cited my authority, abandoning entirely the subject of supplies, he smiled a warrior's smile, and the fervid thoughts

pent within his bosom illumined his swarthy visage, that glowed like a black mass of coal under the bellows of a furnace. 'The battle of Vittoria, which followed not long after, by straining the powers of his vigorous mind to their utmost tension, stirred up a host of impressions congenial to his nature, whereby I so far benefited that, excepting an occasional fit of growling that took place only now and then, during the whole time I remained afterwards under his command, I had no farther cause to complain.

The early portion of that glorious day was passed in grievous suspense by the troops of the third division. The firing at a distance on our right began early in the morning, and lasting many hours without decisive issue, Picton at last grew outrageous in the apprehension of losing a share of the conflict. In the mean time, as usual, I necessarily waited, office implements, luggage, and all, ready packed on the mules' backs, until some decisive movement should take place ; till then it was impossible to determine progress, either one way or other. I had now remained here on a piece of elevated ground immediately contiguous to the main road leading to Vittoria, till after midday ; when at last I descended on the plain. Picton had then recently advanced with the division against the enemy, the battle was now general, and the French battalions, overpowered time after time successively at every point of resistance, were driven from post to post in spite of the thunder of their artillery, and impetuously hurled onwards by the combined army with an impetus continually increasing, along the heights.

Attached to the fortunes of the "fighting division," and with a view to follow in the wake, or rather to steer in a parallel direction somewhat wide of their course, I followed the track of the road on the flat ground below, while they, having mounted the hills on the right amid a roar of musquetry and artillery, drove all before them, mingled apparently in the same unbroken cloud of smoke and fire that enveloped the ranks of the enemy. Meanwhile, I crossed the small bridge, at the attack of which our troops had so recently been victorious, and witnessed with deep interest a point gallantly contested on both sides, where the third division had borne down the foe with resistless force, ably supported, if I remember right, by the guns then attached to the division commanded by Captain Robert Douglas, of the royal artillery. On this spot many victims of that terrible day lay together in a heap, miserably mutilated by cannon-shot, extended on the ground in the same identical spot where they fell, whether dead or dying. The rapid advance of the allied army in full career of victory outran the bounds of even sanguine imagination. For two hours before we entered Vittoria, adhering to the circuitous track of the road below, I rode the greater part of the distance at full gallop, merely keeping pace with the troops above on the right, and anxiously marking the progress of our arms, as if riding across a country wide of a pack of fox-hounds. As they slackened their pace I reined up my horse, and as they advanced, I galloped forwards again, till I brought myself once more in a line with their flank ; and thus I proceeded, till at every contested point the resistance of the enemy became more feeble ; each

time they gave way our soldiers rushed forwards more impetuously; and finally, those awful periods became marked by crashes of musquetry that first swelled on the air, and died away again alternately, like the wind moaning in gusts through the shrouds of a ship, as she rolls in the Bay of Biscay. Meanwhile the walls of Vittoria, a dense cluster of white buildings rising abruptly from the open plain, reflected the slanting rays of a brilliant sun that rendered the outline of the city and its perspective beautifully distinct and clear.

A few individuals were at the gates of the town, in amaze and hurry. The French in headlong retreat, our troops had already passed forwards in pursuit. Every one seemed one way or other astray; staff officers, orderly dragoons, were alike baffled by streets and high walls, on their way to their several brigades. Three dragoons galloped violently past and entered the gates before me. At the moment, I thought they were French, eager at any risk to reclaim some abandoned article of value; indeed, the dress of some of our German cavalry so nearly resembles those of the enemy as to be readily mistaken. As I entered under the arch, a young officer, a slim youth dressed in an English staff uniform, whom I met point blank at the identical moment when the aforesaid three troopers rode in, was coming on horseback out of the town. Their appearance apparently created a similar impression on his mind, for startled at the rencontre, he drew his sword, as if to defend himself, half out of the scabbard. It was the Prince of Orange.

The visible tokens of dismay and confusion, whereof on the present occasion I was a witness in an open

square in Vittoria, comprising altogether a scene such as, probably, no individual of the present generation will live to see again, has been already described in so many different places, that I cannot refrain from feeling averse to enter on a recapitulation. Suffice it to say, that on the present occasion I was not among those fortunate soldiers who “got possession of the army chest, and loaded themselves with money. Let them, said Lord Wellington, when he was informed of it: they deserve all they can find, were it ten times more.” Without presuming to question the sentiments of the Duke of Wellington thus roundly expressed on the subject of plunder, there is no manner of doubt, that ample opportunity was here afforded, to those with time and pockets at command, without the slightest difficulty to employ the one, and fill the other. Some carriages, unattended and deserted, most probably still contained much valuable property; others were already rifled, though the operation had been apparently performed in a hurry and the marauders were gone. Bundles of hay for provender attached to most of the vehicles, together with trunks, ladies’ bonnet boxes, and imperials, betokened the preparations of the enemy for departure; and horses with one trace hooked, and the other unhitched, were here abandoned in the precipitancy of alarm, so urgent that parrots, and a few grinning, disconsolate monkeys, were the only living passengers left behind. The ground meanwhile was strewed with bulky articles, inconvenient to carry away, such as remnants of woollen cloth, entire pieces of flaxen linen, and shop goods of various descriptions. For my own part, I had scarcely leisure to take a glance at things around,

in the anxiety now, in times of particular exigency, to find supplies for my division. Nevertheless, observing a stately artillery mule without a master rolling himself in the dust ; I took the liberty, not as an act of plunder to be considered the reward of merit by the Duke of Wellington, but simply because I was grievously in want at the time of a baggage animal, to take hold of his bridle and lead him away. Others of these animals belonging to the enemy's guns, and taken at Vittoria, fell into officers' hands, probably nearly in the same way ; however, I was obliged to relinquish my long-eared quadruped in the ensuing winter, in consequence of a general order that appeared, requiring such prizes to be given up for the use of the army, in exchange for a prescribed rate of compensation.

CHAPTER V.

A Night Adventure—Valley of Bastan—Roncesvalles—A Hail-storm—A Thunder-storm and Cannonade before Pampluna—Third Division quartered at Ollaque—Picton's Junction with Sir Lowry Cole—A Night March—Picton foils Soult—Picton on the Morning of a Battle—Battle of the Pyrenees—Picton returns to England—Comparison of Picton with Wellington—Picton reproved by Wellington—The Third Division encamp on the Pyrenees—Manner of Life under Canvass—Battle of the Nivelle.

THE rains, for some days subsequent to the battle of Vittoria, were more than usually heavy and incessant, and the roads through which the third division marched in pursuit of the enemy towards Pampeluna, although wider in dimensions than a miry lane, resembled in no remote degree those deep slushy tracks, well known to an East Sussex fox-hunter, in the neighbourhood of Toddington wood. The various difficulties of this anxious period to complete, at the close of each day's march, the supply of provisions to the division, were indeed in themselves so truly appalling, that nothing but the full possession of youth and strength could have enabled me to surmount them.

I shall never forget one grievous night, the clouds black as ink, and the rain that had all day fallen in torrents, still descending with unabated force, when, on arriving late at the division, I was unable as usual to find my place of abode. The like had never

happened before during the campaign, for, often as I had entered the camp after sunset, the commissary's tent being a point of resort usually known to every soldier, even a stranger on arrival need only in ordinary cases make enquiry, to receive intelligence of its site. The troops had long since got partially under shelter, aided by the full advantages of time and opportunity, while, for my part, it seemed inevitably to be my lot, without the slightest chance of procuring a resting place, to endure more than ordinary hardship for the night. All human sounds were drowned in the noise of the rain; each tempest-beaten soldier on that dreary night cringed silently within his narrow lair; the fires being extinguished, communication with the camp on the right of the road, where the troops were bivouacked in the fields, became even more than usually difficult; the ground on every side was an uniform slough; my people and baggage had irremediably gone astray; I had no prospect of relief; I had neither time, daylight, nor implements. I had had nothing for a long time to eat, was already without even a single dry thread in my clothes, and the water was actually running in a waste stream over the tops of my boots, when I secured my horse by the bridle to a hedge, not far from the spot where I then was, and stretched myself at a venture on the ground.

I never in my life happened to be in a more woful plight. As I lay drenched to the skin, and thought of the long time I must remain there before the morning, serious and gloomy apprehension of the consequences arose in my mind, and suggested to a helpless imagination such a train

of reflections as, combined with the anxious responsibility of duty, rendered me, I confess, for the time being, truly miserable.

I had now lain on this spot the full period of an hour, growing every moment still more comfortless and chilly, wide awake, and seriously thinking it probable, among other meditations, that I should at last thus unprofitably, to use a common expression, "catch my death;" when, in the dead silence of the hour, I heard a faint monotonous sound as of a human voice at a distance. Some person, if not in pain, in misery, apparently a brother wanderer, thought I, like myself, away from friends and home far astray, continued to chaunt along a hopeless path his way-worn elegy. Compelled to a state of irksome inactivity, the senses are more readily aroused by the prospect of action. I listened with eager attention, anxious to succour a companion in distress, and ready to operate or cooperate in any possible way so that I could arise and begone. The sound meanwhile evidently approached nearer, and as it advanced, still at intervals reiterated the lamentable appeal. Nearer and more near still, I could at last distinguish clearly at the separate termination of each gust of despair, delivered with a drawling melancholy emphasis, the monosyllable "O." I bent my ear with eagerness to the ground, and listened intently. Again it came. A beam of hope now suddenly enlightened my heart, and I sprang on my feet in an ecstasy, as of life regained. Two magical words pronounced in the Spanish tongue, operated like a talisman on my senses. Already had I recognized the voice of a muleteer in my service, who in spite of the rain, sternly bent

upon his duty, hoarse with hallooing, like Orpheus among the rocks, still continued with unabated zeal and fidelity thus to proclaim throughout the whole camp the vocation of his master. Señor Commissario——o! Señor Commissario——o! were the identical soul inspiring words, borne on the flagging wing of midnight to my ear; and Ignacio——o, Ignacio——o, were those in return which, rejoiced at unexpected deliverance, I lustily rebellowed. On came my sturdy deliverer, vigorously splashing and floundering through the mud, sometimes exclaiming “demonio!” and sometimes “carajo!” thereby partly meaning to execrate the rain and the roads, and partly to express joy at discovering my retreat, till, the water streaming down his broad shoulders, in half drowned costume, seated on a long-eared mule, simply caparisoned with a pack-saddle and halter, I beheld by the glimmering of the sparks while he lighted his cigar, the manly benevolent countenance of Ignacio Ruiz.

Heartfelt congratulations need little time in delivery; neither on the present occasion was recourse had to compliments. The good fellow, overjoyed to see me, had now performed one only of those numerous acts of kindness and fidelity, whereof hundreds might be related to the honour of that noble class of men, the trusty band of Spanish muleteers employed, during the period of the Peninsular war, in the service of the British army. Ignacio having acquitted himself to his own satisfaction, required no other reward, nor asked any more for his pains, than, by the help of flint and steel, that he carried in his pouch, as I hinted before, to light his own cigar. “Ah ha, Ignacio, donde viene hombre?”

“ Ah ah, Ignacio, where do you come from, man?” said I. “ Señor, no es preciso estar a qui, vamos,” “ There is no occasion, Sir, to remain here, let us be off,” replied he, pumping hard at his cigar. “ Vamos,” “ Let us be off,” rejoined I, in lively accordance with the sentiment. At the same time sitting down squash upon my sloppy saddle, my shivering horse quietly followed the mule whereon Ignacio had already unceremoniously ridden away.

The Spanish cocks in the neighbourhood had not yet strained their throats, even supposing them able on that miserable night, or morning, to have clapped their wings; in short, it was a little past twelve o’clock when, not far from the road side, appeared a chapel, containing unquestionably for the present a troop of inhabitants, for even at this late hour I could distinguish the sound of voices, and a strong light streamed forth abundantly from the Gothic windows. Ignacio still keeping the lead, now entered the door upon his mule, and I, not tardily inclined, the next moment followed, and found myself in an instant, to my unspeakable joy, sitting erect on my saddle in the aisle of the building, in semblance like a chief of banditti among his associates, a blazing fire meanwhile loudly crackling under my horse’s nose. Clerks, servants, horses, baggage, and baggage mules were disposed within the sacred building, in comfortable and welcome array, and loud and joyous was the shout that, as my horse’s feet first trampled on the pavement, assailed my ears in communion of good fellowship, and in lively greeting of a lost traveller to his home. It was a shout that converted these dismal precincts to a region of hilarity, a shout that cheered the

blood of the living, and was, I trust, received in atonement for an act of desecration of a spot dedicated to the repose of many a cold heart that lay mouldering below.

Dry clothes, a hearty supper, and black wine from the pig-skin speedily restored all those of nature's functions that the tempest had set wrong ; I lay down to rest in the spirit of thankfulness, the toils and troubles of life were speedily forgotten, and the chequered picture of fortune's vicissitudes vanished before the mantle of sleep. * * *

During the course of those manœuvres carried on between the two armies, in the period while Soult, who had lately taken command of the French troops, was entrenching himself on the Nivelle, and previous to the ascent of the third division to the summit of the Pyrenees, Picton's head quarters were some time stationed at the small town of Ariscun in the valley of the Bastan. The troops meanwhile occupied the heights not far therefrom removed. We also were quartered for a few days at Roncesvalles, famous for the deeds in love and war of the ancient Troubadours, and where, the less the wonder, the spot once visited, why the nymphs of yore were so abominably cold-hearted towards their suitors that the latter were not unfrequently put to the pains of a seven years' courtship. A more mountainous and monastic retreat cannot be conceived than this town, imbedded on heights, where it rains, I really believe, almost every day in the year, that is to say, whenever there is such a thing to be seen as a cloud in the sky ; and clouds, I have remarked, even in clear weather, among the mountain paths, rolling along the road before the breeze in palpable form, tangible pillars of

vapour, and of limits so exactly definable, that it were easy at all times to avoid them, by stepping aside out of their way.

Throughout the whole of this bleak region, where the elements of earth and of air come in contact with one another at unusual altitudes, amid exhalation and congelation, it naturally follows that the hail-storms are violent and frequent; and I remember an instance, early in the autumn, of one more tremendous below in the valley, than in my life I ever remember to have heard of or witnessed. Being on my way home, I galloped hard before the shower that I saw approaching, and even then sustained a woful pelting, although not till I was housed the icy fragments descended with their utmost fury. Some hailstones were driven like bullets through the glass windows into the room, and there in the valley of Bastan, whereof the name implies plenty, I had an opportunity of comparing them accordingly both with eggs and with walnuts. A plate of each by accident lay on the table; and literally the hailstones were nearly as big as the eggs, and considerably bigger than the walnuts. Sir Thomas Brisbane, then on the spot, sent an account, which by the way, I never saw, of this very hailstorm, to the Royal Society, wherefore I speak on a point of fact with still greater confidence.

On one other occasion I witnessed a storm of thunder and hail, sufficiently remarkable for its terrific violence, but still more memorable owing to the accompanying appearances and sounds of cannon and battle. The third division was quartered in the little town of Huarte, about a mile and a half from the walls of Pampeluna, which city was

then garrisoned by the enemy, and consequently, till reduced, a bar to the progress of the allied army within the French territory. The battle of the Pyrenees had not yet been fought, and our troops were continually on the alert, ready to repel at a moment the menaces of Soult, whose line was extended in position on the heights contiguous to ours. I shall hereafter briefly revert to the movement on the occasion of the junction between the third and fourth divisions, on the attack of Soult on the latter corps, that brought us to the present spot, in fact, so soon as the anecdote I am now about to relate is off my hands.

At the time I am speaking of, we were roused almost daily to a state of stirring excitement by the frequent brisk skirmishes that took place among the light troops on the hills, close above the town, on which occasions the drums and bugles of the division immediately sounded to arms, the general was a-field, all staff officers were mounted and ready, and the commissariat stores packed on the mules' backs waiting to depart.

One summer's evening, the clouds hung particularly dark and lowering on the hills, a deep stillness pervaded the air, the swallows swept the earth with their bosoms in depressed flight, large spreading drops of rain began to fall, when, during those few moments of dreary expectant repose that invariably precede an approaching thunder-storm, the universal silence of nature was broken by a rattling crash of musquetry, and almost at the same instant, the sky rent by a vivid streak of white lightning, and loud thunder simultaneously crackled from end to end of the horizon. Officers started quickly on foot, and

called aloud for their horses ; drums, bugles and trumpets burst forth in unison, and the “ boot and saddle” call adding to the din, soon set in motion the rumbling wheels of the artillery. The firing among the troops, and the storm’s fury, both increased together ; the former affording reasonable apprehension that the enemy, then within the distance of a mile, were about to make a desperate attempt to break through our line, while rain fell in torrents amid glaring flashes of lightning, and explosions of thunder shook the mountains to their very foundations.

Being unfortunately unable at this conjuncture to get my people together, and therefore behind hand in preparation for departure, my various boxes and packages ready for loading lying, for want of mules to carry them away, before the door of my quarters in the street, I was in serious expectation of being obliged to leave every thing in the clutches of the enemy, when my faithful Spaniards with their mules opportunely made their appearance. Nothing daunted by the present aspect of affairs, but all aroused by the urgency of the moment to a corresponding pitch of energy, each quickly determined upon a particular task to perform, and acquitted himself with the same degree of ease and promptitude, which was always forthcoming whenever the British interests were at stake, on the part of these people, on every trying occasion.

An astounding cannonade now broke forth below from the town of Pampeluna. The French garrison within the fortress, about a mile and a half distant, flushed with the hope of succour from their countrymen, responded to their volleys on the hills, and the

fury of the elements, by the heavy pieces of ordnance mounted on the walls, which now continued to boom amid the storm in rapid succession. The thunder of heaven, lightning, and rain streaming from the overcharged clouds, were awfully mingled with sounds of mortal strife and the intrepid murmur of preparation,—and in addition to all, a regiment of Spanish cavalry expecting a sortie from Pampeluna, galloping rapidly and fiercely towards the fortress, contributed other new and warlike sounds to the existing clamour.

In the short space of half an hour the tranquillity of our village was restored. The storm passed away, the sun beamed again on the plain, the firing on the hills ceased, and the cannonade, faint as it were with exhausted hope, died away in despair. Our troops on the heights firmly held their ground, and the captive garrison of Pampeluna expended in vain their powder.

* * * *

Previous to the above occurrence, in the beginning of July of the present year, 1813, after having remained, even before then, a little while at this same village of Huarte, the third division occupied the village of Ollaque, a few leagues further in advance in the pass of Maya. On the 25th, Picton, by a sudden movement from thence, it is well known, effected a junction with Sir Lowry Cole, commanding the fourth division on our right, and reaped on that occasion the honours due to a manœuvre whereby he succeeded in repelling the advance of Soult, who had vigorously attacked the said fourth division, determined to relieve Pampeluna from her blockade by the Spanish forces. A few guns, I forget the num-

ber, attended us on this occasion, but I very well remember the difficulty and delay attendant on dragging them along mountain paths, where, in order to effect their passage, an entire new road was in many places cut for several yards together. These impediments, Picton being unwilling to advance without the guns, retarded the progress of the troops, so that in the end it was late in the day when we arrived at the point of destination, and the sun was about a couple of hours above the horizon, when the fourth division being then engaged with the enemy, Picton, prepared to cover the retreat, and having gained in the rear of the skirmishing troops the high road to Pampeluna, advanced at the head of his division. At our appearance, the firing very soon ceased, and both divisions, retiring at sunset upon a village in the rear, commenced in company, so soon as it was dark, a retrograde movement upon Pampeluna.

This short retreat, though successfully conducted, proved a most fatiguing night march, dense masses of men being more closely thronged together than I ever at any other time remember to have witnessed during the campaign ; while for my own part, I was completely cut off and separated from my division the whole of the night without a possibility of regaining my place in the line of march, moving the greater part of the way at a pace not exceeding a mile and a half an hour, and hemmed in amidst a throng of strangers, a regiment of Spanish infantry, who, like a mob, occupied the whole breadth of the road, without order or regularity. If the enemy, aware of the situation of these troops, had then pressed on our rear, there must inevitably, I think, have ensued, a scene of terrible confusion. However,

on the contrary, the manœuvre led to a brilliant result, for at five o'clock in the morning we prosperously arrived at our old quarters at Huarte, where, on the neighbouring heights, with which he was previously well acquainted, Picton immediately proceeded, without taking rest or sustenance, to extend his troops on the elevated ground above the village, in that skilful and memorable position, which gained him immortal fame, and effectually foiled Soult in the attempt to relieve Pampeluna.

Notwithstanding the glorious and cheering incense to Picton's ambition, thus to hold the "*Lieutenant d' Empereur*" at bay,—it was owing probably to the deep responsibility of an extended sphere of action that pressed upon his mind that he now became sensibly exhausted by watchfulness and care. Not later than two o'clock on the morning before the battle of the Pyrenees, I was awakened by a messenger with a sudden summons to attend the General,—a circumstance, at such an hour, altogether unusual ; however, I lost no time to obey the order, and repaired forthwith to a tent which he had caused that night to be pitched on the outskirts of the town. We were now quartered at Huarte, as I have already stated. When I arrived at the tent, as the General was already on foot and abroad, I enquired of his attendants the direction in which he had gone. The servant pointed to the lofty dark mountains that in prospect overhang the town, whither I bent my way accordingly, and encountered Picton in a melancholy, meditative mood, at a distance of a few hundred yards from his tent, pacing backwards and forwards in the obscurity of the hour. It was in-

deed so dark that, being immediately under the shadow of the mountain, even his tall stately figure was barely visible; we were in fact now close to the base of those almost inaccessible heights, then doomed, before their tops were burnished by a rising sun, to be gallantly scaled and carried by valour and the British arms.

The iron-visaged warrior seemed beaten by bodily fatigue; I had never seen his fiery, impetuous spirit so tame before; and he addressed me moreover with a subdued softness of tone and manner, to which, on like occasions, I was wholly unused. In an attenuated voice, indicative of extreme exhaustion, at the same time giving way apparently to kind friendly feelings, he questioned me mildly, and earnestly, about our supplies; he desired me to have every mule with the division instantly laden, and dispatched as soon as possible to some convenient point of rendezvous, not less than three miles distant, on the road towards Vittoria. "For," added he, in a boding, impressive accent, muttering the words between his teeth, as it were confidentially; "no man alive can tell the result of this day's work." I returned to my duty, impressed by an anxious presentiment, produced by the total change in the General's tone and manner that I had just witnessed; and which, I have no doubt, was altogether engendered from the weighty pressure of his responsibility. Nevertheless, an hour had scarcely elapsed subsequent to the above conversation, before twinkling flashes of musquetry suddenly spangled the black curtain of night, and our gallant soldiers rapidly ascending the mountain's side, as it were in

swarms like fire-flies, in the dark, incontinently attained an elevated position that rivalled the stars in the firmament. A complete rout of Soult's veteran troops now forthwith succeeded, of which event, although many are conversant with the general details, very few notwithstanding are, I believe, aware of the extent of confusion carried into the ranks of the enemy. The entire neighbourhood among the mountains, after the battle, teemed with parties of French soldiers, strolling about in twos, and threes, and sixes, astray from their beaten regiments, and in such numbers that, owing to their very multitude, our people found it not worth while to detain them in custody. At this especial period, as I traversed the heights every day in the performance of my duty, I met so many such captives, that is to say, unarmed men belonging to the enemy at large within our lines, that I may even literally assert that frequent instances occurred where these prisoners *de jure*, had they been so minded, might readily, for the present moment at least, have made a prisoner of me.

The battle of the Pyrenees was no sooner fought than Picton, leaving the third division under the command of Sir Charles Colville, proceeded to embark on leave of absence, to pass the winter in England; and here I cannot refrain from adverting to the parallel in some quarters attempted to be set up between him and the Duke of Wellington; the general of division, and his great commander. Unquestionably, intuitive tact, promptitude in decision, and vigour in execution, were in Picton's character the elements of an intellect that enabled him with inadequate experience in military tactics, to turn to

present use the acquirements of study, and evince by great deeds a knowledge of the theory of war, yet it is singular that he never witnessed offensive and defensive operations of armies on an extended scale, till he arrived on the Peninsula. Great, therefore, as may be the meed of praise due to his valour and services in that campaign, yet so limited was his sphere of action after all, compared to the other, that, instead of taking rank as a rival, he ought rather to be considered the tyro of the Duke of Wellington—one who actually first smelt powder under his banner.

The comparison, if followed to its source, may probably after all be traced to the flattering estimate engendered of Picton's own ambition, who, impatient of control, was ever inclined to enlarge beyond proper limits, his own authority, and canvas, at any rate freely, the strategy of his commander. I will not state here as an absolute fact, what I nevertheless believe to be true, namely, that at one period during our advance through Spain, Picton, impressed with an apprehension of the impossibility of continuing such rapid and unintermitting marches, actually reported his division, merely on the ground of being without supplies beyond the present day, incapable of proceeding. To his remonstrance the Duke of Wellington is reported to have uttered the following laconic reply: "The army will advance either with or without the third division." The next morning's rising sun saw the troops again in motion, and Picton, if the above anecdote be true, however ardent usually his desire to lead, might, in this particular instance, be fairly said to follow. However,

I will state another instance whereof I myself was a witness, of personal collision with his commander, although between both, by the way, on points of discipline, there never could have existed a serious misunderstanding. In reference to this subject the Duke moreover has explicitly stated, as regards Sir Thomas Picton, that there never arose "a difference of opinion; much less any thing in the nature of a quarrel between them."—*Robinson's Life of Picton*, Vol. II. p. 399.

Without presuming to define the degree of difference that might have reasonably existed between parties, whereof one possessed and knew how to exercise legitimate control, I will merely observe, with reference to individuals so noble and renowned, that I relate the following anecdote touching points of military subordination exactly as it occurred, without the slightest wish or intention to add either weight or colour by inference or inuendo.

It was subsequently, one day in the ensuing spring, Picton having gone in the interim and returned from England, not long I think after the battle of Orthez, while the third division, treading on the heels of Soult, were wending their way steadily through the fertile plains of the South of France, and halting occasionally, as if courteously to concede to the enemy in front, a peaceable retreat; the Duke, moreover, as it turned out in the end, having no intention then to attack, that the morning passed away in suspense to those unacquainted with the chief's design. The distribution of quarters for the day was not yet promulgated, neither did any one know the point precisely whereon we were moving; wherefore, as our progress was slow,

and the staff-officers were unusually on the alert, matters assumed an ominous appearance, as if either some decisive manœuvre were about to take place, or the division to be immediately led into action; at all events, the tardy, reluctant steps of the hostile troops in front portended, so at least it seemed to the unlearned, a show of resistance. The exact part of the country, though it matters not, I have forgotten; however, we were on a wide turnpike road at the entrance of a town or village. The stoppages and embarrassments on the line of march became, the farther we advanced, the more prolonged and frequent, and sometimes, although not moving at any time faster than a mile an hour, there was reason to believe that we were actually halting altogether. At this crisis the light troops of another division came in contact with those of the enemy, and a firing of musquetry was heard among the skirmishers in the inclosed land on our left and beyond the village. The division now formed a dense mass in close column, hardly progressing and hardly halting, advancing perhaps no more than a horse's length in the space of every succeeding minute. At last Picton, leaving Sir John Keane in his place at the head of the troops, rode forwards impatiently to reconnoitre the enemy, and remained so long absent that matters seemed approaching a serious dilemma. Anxious expectation was entertained, if not of an order to halt, at least to be led at once into action, while Sir John Keane, as regarded progress, as Picton had done before, merely kept the troops in motion, and that was all.

The Duke of Wellington, without an aide-du-

camp, unattended by any individual of his staff, now came galloping at utmost speed to the head of the division, and as if eagerly in quest of the General, looked hastily around, and then impatiently accosted Sir John Keane. "Where is Sir Thomas Picton?" exclaimed the Duke. "I don't exactly know—somewhere in front, my lord," replied Sir John, elevating on his saddle a soldier-like figure, and speaking rather through his teeth, in his peculiar way. The Duke repeated the question with more earnest emphasis, "Where is General Picton?" Sir John Keane remained silent. "I want to know?" said the Duke, in a loud voice, "I want to know, why is not the General at the head of his division?" "Halt!" at the same time he cried with vehement action. "Halt!" steadily and obediently repeated Sir John Keane,—and nothing but "Halt!" was heard in many and various distant spots, as the word travelled to the rear of the division. Not another syllable was uttered by either party, before a trooper of the corps of guides rode clattering to the front in a hurry, and touching his helmet with his hand, addressed the Duke in the French language in a tone of interrogation. Although not far from the parties, I did not hear the question, but I plainly heard the reply, accompanied with violent and eager gesture. "Ici ! ici ! ici !" repeated the Duke loudly half-a-dozen times over, striking the air violently in the direction of the ground with his clenched right hand, and then he set spurs to his thoroughbred, red chestnut charger. The latter tossed up its head with a snort, impetuously sprang forward at

full speed, and in a few minutes, *ventre a terre*, transported its gallant rider, his white cloak streaming in the breeze, to the identical copse, distant about half a mile, from whence the firing of the skirmishers proceeded. As horse and rider furiously careered towards the spot, I fancied I perceived by the motion of the animal's tail, a type, through the medium of the spur, of the quickened energies of the noble commander, on the moment when, for the first time, he caught view of Picton. The latter was then earnestly at work; and whether merely watching the proceedings of the skirmishers, or directing their movements, at any rate threading the mazes in and out, backwards and forwards, through the copse, like a beagle on the foot of a rabbit.

I saw the Duke accost Picton; I saw both draw up their horses alongside the hedge; I saw both there hold a lengthened conference; and, the firing on the Duke's arrival having immediately ceased, I saw Picton, looking gloomily on his return, dismiss straight to their day's quarters the whole division.

I now return to the point and period whence I digressed, namely, the time subsequent to the battle of the Pyrenees when the third division occupied the neighbourhood of Huarte. After Picton had gone to England, and the allied army crossed the Bidassoa, the fortress of St. Sebastian having been taken by storm, the third division took their position on the bleak heights of the Pyrenees, immediately above the small mountain village of Zuggaremurdi, there waiting for the time when the garrison of Pampeluna might choose to surrender, and thereby

enable our troops to enter France, descending upon the rich plain below. Here we remained under canvas about forty days, in full sight of Soult's position and fortifications on the Nivelle, and exposed, the greater part of the period, not only to incessant wind and rain, but to hail, sleet, and snow. On the spot where the troops were encamped, the wind was frequently so high, and the ground under foot generally so unsound from continued moisture, that serious inconvenience was sustained during the nights, owing to the tent pegs becoming loose and giving way, and in spite of the utmost precaution, the tents of officers, as well as of privates, were not unfrequently overturned, leaving the naked inmates unsheltered, and shouting for assistance in the dark.

During our protracted sojourn on these stormy, barren heights, the supply of the troops by the commissariat with their allotted provisions, day after day on the spot, was alone maintained, during the whole period, by heavy, continuous labour of both man and beast. The division mules were daily becoming more exhausted and out of condition from exposure to the inclemency of the weather and never-ceasing toil, on their way to and from the dépôts in the vicinity, through mountain roads, by which they were compelled to pass and repass continually, so bare of all manner of vegetation that even the straw eaten by my own animals, as fodder, was procured at a distance of fifteen English miles from the camp. Vigilance thus became every day more indispensable, in order to exact a due performance of duty from the capatazes and muleteers, disheartened and appalled at the prospect of remaining the winter where we

now were; men whose grievances on the part of their jaded mules were really not void of foundation, and who, it is my firm belief, at this crisis, were it not for considerable arrears of payment then due, instead of remaining in our service, would have left us *en masse*. Had such an event unfortunately taken place, a long train of previous operations would have been at once frustrated, and Wellington must inevitably have abandoned his advanced position.

Choosing a centrical spot for my own habitation, the better to ensure regularity in the cargoes of provisions brought from the dépôts, and promptly to dispatch the mule brigades, on their arrival at the camp, back again, with the least possible delay, although the staff-officers of the division were all quartered and housed below in the village of Zuggaremurdi, I pitched my tent contiguous to the troops on the heights. The site was neither more nor less than literally a bog, for I was compelled to a choice, either of shelter from an adjacent brow, or to run the risk, office implements, public papers, and all, in the middle of the night, perhaps, some time or other, of being blown away. I provided for comfort and security as well as I could, and fortified my flimsy edifice with a foundation.

On a circular space exceeding by a few feet the space of the tent I laid down a platform of rough blocks of stone, serving within the purpose of a pavement, and without, of holding down and keeping secure short stakes placed in lieu of tent-pegs. Within, a layer of fern plants was strewed, and upon these tarpaulins. Thus equipped and furnished, my tent served the purpose of an office by day, wherein,

being stationary, the clerks were regularly several hours at work; afterwards, of a dining room, and lastly, of a place of rest for all. Night after night I spread my mattress on the tarpaulin aforesaid, and night after night, in despite of the inclemency of the weather during the month of October and beginning of November, and notwithstanding that the fern plants, exchanged every three days, were converted always by damp to a state of muck, I suffered not in any degree from ailment or cold; indeed I undressed regularly and slept as soundly as a countryman after a hard day's threshing in a barn.

Even at the worst of seasons, whatever the state of wind and weather, so long as the troops remained stationary, and especially as the lengthening evenings contributed daily an increased portion of time, I had at any rate the satisfaction, and frequently in company with cheerful companions, of a comfortable dinner. In a servant's tent, pitched contiguous to mine, by the help of a small temporary building of stones piled in the shape of a limekiln, a hot joint of meat, whether baked or roasted it may be hard to say, but of which, many is the day I have inhaled during the time of cooking its tantalizing flavour, was prepared for the table. Many is the social evening I have passed within this abode, light-hearted and joyous, every member of the company defended by his cloak from the moisture, which, as the rain pattered hard without, penetrated the canvass, and hung upon the lining above our heads in a vaporous mist, that surrounded each candle by a halo, whose many-coloured prismatic rays danced around its flame. A large pigskin full of wine placed in one corner of the tent afforded a never-failing reservoir, whereto

access was had at will through the medium of him who had the advantage or disadvantage of proximity, and who had, in fact, nothing else to do but, catching a firm grip of the said vessel above the aperture, to untie the cord, and splashing sometimes his own knuckles and sometimes the clothes of his neighbour, allow the rushing purple torrent to inundate the sides of the bowl. Even after the lapse of years that have intervened, I yet venerate the memory of the said purple stream, liquor that cheered the inmost recesses of the heart, and of qualities such as ancient Horace predicates of Nectar, the beverage of the gods. In literal truth and without exaggeration, after the third or fourth orbit of the can, it caused the mouths of those who boozed to be black, more or less, as ink-bottles.

My guests, on returning to their quarters in the camp, availed themselves of a row of stepping-stones, in extent thirty yards and more, and placed at intervals of a yard or thereabouts from one another. These served the purpose of a bridge over ground boggy and unsound. Some resting unsteadily, and others being rough and uneven in form, the transit was not safely effected without a full share of activity, inasmuch as on whichever side the adventurer perchance might step awry, he lighted certainly in mud considerably above his knees.

Happily as I passed my time on this spot, I was unquestionably happier still, when I stood, on a dark winter's morning, long before daylight, on the 10th of November, 1813, about to leave it, without house or home of any sort whatever; tent, tarpaulins, office implements, luggage, altogether

packed, tightly corded, and fast upon mules' backs, rejoicing to leave the cold inhospitable region to its denizen the eagle, and descend, with my starving impoverished cattle, into the land of plenty.

As the fight, like that of the Pyrenees, commenced long before daybreak, the troops had some time since departed stealthily, in darkness, on their fatal errand, when, accompanied by my little cavalcade, I began slowly to descend the steep. An awful pause and stillness was in unison with the occasion and the hour. Many thousand fellow-creatures about to commence the mortal strife, although at this moment wrapt together in impenetrable obscurity, were nevertheless far within the range of sight, and silence became still more impressive by the faint and monotonous clank of the mules' bells, that in accordance with the wearied gait of those patient animals, emitted a pastoral sound. A period of anxious expectation gave rise to boding impressions, nor could I afterwards refrain, on the first sound of fire-arms, from considering the bright brief twinkle of the musquet, followed by its deadly report and protracted interval of darkness, as the symbol of life and death. Each vanishing spark pathetically represented the joyous existence of a human being,—the report Nature's awful summons,—and the darkness the long cold season of the grave. Immediately on the point of exchanging, as far as regarded the essentials of comfort and shelter, a land of bondage as it were for a land of promise, I involuntarily gave way for a time to gloomy reflections, that alas, in many cases, were too truly realized on the enemy's redoubt, where, before the sun had reached his noonday's

height, many a gallant heart, borne on pliant limbs from the mountain's top, stopped in the moment of victory to rest for ever, and moulder far away from friends and home in the distant valley.

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The third division, after the battle of the Nivelle, were quartered in the town of St. Pé.

CHAPTER VI.

Winter Quarters at Hasparren—An Alert—A practical Joke—Foraging in the Neighbourhood of an Enemy—The Gave d'Oleron—A Rencontre—Spanish Muleteers—An Anecdote of their Energy—Battle of Orthez—Extraordinary Course—Battle of Vic Bigorre—Critical Position of the Third Division on the Garonne—Battle of Toulouse—Liberal Mind of Picton—Parting of the English and Portuguese—Third Division embark for England at Pouillac—Conclusion.

QUARTERED at Ustaritz on the Nive, the division remained in reserve on the day, namely, the 13th of December, when Soult, then entrenched around Bayonne, made his attack on Lord Hill's position. The campaign of 1813 might now be said to be concluded; nevertheless the rains, while we remained in this part of the country, were so incessant, and the roads so execrably bad, that, although in a plentiful country, I had still extreme difficulty to supply the division, especially since our troops were in close contact with the enemy. I passed the greater part of each successive day on horseback, travelling at a foot's pace through miry tracks, that reminded me of such as in former days I had seen in Kent, in the neighbourhood of Chattenden Roughs, in the hundred of Hoo; and even after I had obtained wheat, it was frequently impossible, the mills being flooded and useless, to convert the same into flour.

Finally, we went into regular winter quarters at Hasparren.

We remained at Hasparren nearly a couple of months, that is to say, till the 14th of February, when we again broke from cantonments, and commenced the next year's campaign. Within this neat little country town, every resident officer experienced a variety in the occurrences of life, a chequered mutability, sometimes inclining to tranquillity and sometimes to turbulence, and ranging between the full blessings of peace and the vexations of war. Ever in contact with the enemy, our advanced posts were occupied upon terms whereby, at some places, a friendly communication prevailed between both armies, divided merely by a narrow river or brook, and at others, besides prisoners being made mutually among the foraging parties, at least once a week happened "an alert." On these occasions, a menace before daybreak on the part of the enemy, and consequent affair of picquets, roused from their beds by the sound of musquetry the whole division, officers and men who, in a few minutes, abroad in the dark and fully accoutred, stood ready, alike prepared either immediately to march or go into action. Such here was the state of discipline with the British army, that occurrences like these made little more impression on the parties concerned, than on our English turnpike roads the blast of the mail-guard's horn on the energies of a horse-keeper. Servants whistled as they packed up the masters' luggage, the Spaniard chaunted his song as he caparisoned his mules, and in the space of a quarter of an hour, all, bag and baggage, were

under weigh, with less hurry and confusion, than is wont to prevail frequently on unimportant occasions of domestic life.

These exciting events exhilarated rather than depressed the young and lively. Notwithstanding their frequency, the aides-du-camp of Lord Combermere, if report said true, practised an alert, every now and then, gratuitously, to the detriment of a venerable chieftain of the army, and for mere fun and frolic, were wont, after the general had retired to rest, to purloin his indispensables, and then arouse him with the news that the enemy were coming. The general, to the amusement of his tormentors, who were anxiously listening all the while at his bed-room door, would accordingly chide his valet, in a tone first piano, but afterwards gradually crescendo to the furious and fortissimo. "Bring me my pantaloons!" he would exclaim. "Bring me my pantaloons, I say!" "Why the d—l don't you bring me my pantaloons?" "Och blood and ouns man, bring me my pantaloons!" and so on to a climax.

Most of the cattle at this period, killed daily for the use of the division, were actually conveyed by the inhabitants by stealth through the enemy's lines; yet, in despite of the "alerts," and this apparently disturbed position of affairs, since people inured to scenes of turbulence, gradually becoming reconciled to a comparative state of tranquillity, forgot, as it were, the existence of a condition more allied to positive security; and since every officer on the staff in the town inhabited excellent quarters, each individual exercised his mind in his own pursuit or vocation, and walked, rode, ate, drank, and rested

at night free from all manner of apprehension. In such a state Picton, after his return from leave of absence in England, when he resumed the command, found the third division.

At the commencement of hostilities in 1814, when Sir John Hope, having crossed at the mouth of the Adour with a part of the troops, remained to blockade Bayonne, and the remainder of the army, together with the third division led by Picton, followed close on the rear of Soult as he retreated upon Orthez, my labours in the way of procuring supplies, compared with previous difficulties on the advance through Spain, were light and easy. Nevertheless, I rode long distances every day, not only to procure the main article, wheat, but to seek mills and ovens, and make other necessary arrangements. Progress was rendered critical to a stranger, by the natural obstacles that presented themselves in the country, such as frequent rivers and brooks, affording awkward and even dangerous fords, and a population, in whom, attached as they generally appeared to be to the British cause, it were altogether inconsistent with prudence implicitly to confide.

More than once it happened, either when in quest of fords and bridges, or exploring the country night and day, astray in my bearings, and disinclined to enlist the services of a guide, that I was within an ace of capture by the enemy. "Señor, no es bueno, buscar lumbres," exclaimed on one occasion my sturdy companion, a Spanish capataz, as we rode at night straight on end towards camp fires, which, after a long day's journey, I took to be our's, but which on the contrary proved to belong to the enemy. At the present moment, being actually within their line,

it was entirely owing to the fortunate intersection of a lane, whereby we turned aside out of the road unperceived, that we escaped a party of their cavalry who passed us close by, returning to their camp, on their way probably from a foraging expedition, or picquet duty.

Once again, also late in the evening, I found myself in a dilemma, and under the necessity of crossing a rapid and wide river, the Gave d' Oleron, without knowing exactly how or where ; but at any rate without other means of proceeding to my home, if indeed, that point can so be called, which, scarcely ever, morning and evening, remained the same. However, I was on my route to the division, making the best of my way to a ford, where by the way a disastrous affair had happened only a day or two previously, on the occasion of an attack made on the opposite side by a superior force of the enemy on a small party of our light troops and cavalry. The said party, after effecting the passage, were surprised and driven back to the ford, some killed, and a large portion drowned in the attempt to recross the river. This spot was not far from Sauveterre, the latter place being occupied on the preceding day by the enemy, who blew up the bridge, and retreated in the night. Picton, in the course of the morning, having crossed, I believe by a bridge of boats, had taken up his quarters in the town.

I learnt that the division had crossed the river during my absence in the course of this morning's ride, by what means however, and where, I was not made acquainted. As I bent my course towards the ford, I luckily on the way fell in with three or four Spanish capatazes belonging to the division travel-

ling in the same direction, with whom I was glad to join company, and accordingly we proceeded together. These men were now returning, after leave of absence, from their respective homes, having in consequence of arrangements recently effected for the replenishing the number of their mules, purchased several, whereof three or four they at present led with them, besides others, fine stately creatures, which they rode. I found these men bedecked in the full Spanish costume of slashed garments, scarlet cording, and silver buttons,—they were noble looking manly fellows,—and, as I was plodding lonely along, a notable reinforcement.

Associates at the present moment were the more acceptable, inasmuch as, according to intelligence gathered as we proceeded, it appeared that the aforesaid ford, whither we were now going, partly perhaps owing to the occurrence before mentioned, and partly in consequence of the river being swollen by late heavy rains, at all events, whether reasonably or otherwise, had obtained a bad name. Sure enough, when we reached the spot, it merited the distinction. The broad stream, here tumbling fiercely along over its uneven rocky bottom, were it not known by the name of a ford, would be thought impassable. But the darkness, now fast approaching, allowed no delay.

Having at once determined upon a suitable line of direction, I was turning my horse's head straight towards the stream, when two females crying bitterly, and wringing their hands in despair, appeared pacing backwards and forwards upon the shore; it being evident, that their distress proceeded from the fear of the coming darkness, and their total want of means

of crossing the river. A Portuguese lady, the wife of an officer, with a couple of small children, her maid-servant, and both attended by a slim lad with two little staggering mules, bearing sundry packages and bundles, was thus tardily making the best of her way in the wake of her regiment. Slight weak creatures like these mules, hardly capable of ordinary campaign service, were totally unfit to stem this current, otherwise than by being actually dragged across themselves. And this manœuvre, as well as helping their fair mistress, with the present means at my command, I accordingly resolved to try. With the object in view, and proceeding to address the lady, I instantly recognised, to my extreme surprise, the identical person whom, nearly four years before, during the retreat of the allied army to the lines, I had the satisfaction to succour near the town of Coimbra, and when a clerk attached to a brigade of artillery, rescue fainting by the roadside, as I have in another place related, from the hands of the enemy.

As before, compliments and ceremony were on the present occasion alike superfluous, for the exigency of the case demanded a prompt remedy—but except in the above relation, all analogy with the time when this lady and myself had previously met, was now totally at an end. Then, the enemy were pursuing us; now, we in turn were pressing hard upon them; the last adventure was a tale of the land, this was about to be one of the water. A clerk in the commissariat, mounted on a garron mule, I then lamented the want of means at disposal to render her assistance; now, fortune threw in my way a sturdy band of gallant men on whose fidelity I would have staked my life, full worthy protectors of distressed damselry;

and lastly, the lady herself as totally changed in appearance as, preserving good looks, it was possible for any lady to be ; instead of being delicate, slender, and of interestingly pallid hue, was now robust, ruddy, and of dimensions wonderfully expanded, the happy mother of two fine children. Nevertheless, since the same pair of black expressive eyes whose imploring glances had ever since maintained a place in my recollection, now beamed brilliantly through their tears, and above all, since the circumstance happened three and twenty years ago, it will not appear over marvellous when I state that I had no sooner taken the youngest child in my arms to carry it across the river, than I began to grow on the occasion extremely sentimental. The lady's preparations for the transit soon dissipated the tender illusion.

The fair heroine, profiting by the experience of four years' campaigning life, not deficient in mental energy, and seeing that no time was to be lost, immediately in the first place ceased crying, and very deliberately sat down and pulled off her shoes and stockings. Being lifted on the back of a huge mule, she then voluntarily adapted her form to the position of all others the best calculated to ensure safety ; that is to say, she placed herself relentlessly astraddle, or *escachapernas*, literally split-legged, as the Portuguese call it, on her palfrey, and the maid, who by the way had no stockings to take off, rode likewise astraddle on another. The two little mules were then taken in tow for the purpose of being dragged bodily across the river. In despite of bathos of imagery, the scene after all brought sentiment back to my mind, when, the anxious glance of a mother lighted on the helpless child

that I bore in my arms, and the torrent buffeting the breast of a powerful horse I then fortunately rode, I led the way in front of the party across the river.

At no period of my life, whether following hounds or otherwise, do I ever remember to have met with a more villainous ford. Several times I was obliged to swerve in my course, owing to the rugged bottom, and the huge masses of rock below, that caused my horse to flounder and reel from their vast size. Meanwhile the stream rushed furiously along like a mill-dam, as high as the flaps of my saddle, and altogether the passage was alone effected by the superior strength of our cattle. I was indeed well pleased when, on the opposite shore I successfully delivered to the mother her child, and acquitted myself of my responsibility.—Of the lady, the subject of this little anecdote, I have never since heard tidings, yet I now and then allow myself meditatively to think of her history, and though she be, in the course of connubial affairs now probably a grandmother, even to indulge a sort of sympathetic conviction, that the spirit-stirring adventures of her youth recorded in this volume have not only passed frequently from her lips to another generation, but even yet remain identified by memory with the stranger caballero.

“Maldicho, Señor, mas el río es muy malo,” exclaimed one of the Spaniards, whose mule stumbling in the river splashed him from head to foot. “Estamos bien aquí nos otros,” said another in the gravest possible tone as he emerged from the stream, in fact with good reason thankful to have crossed the river. In streaming cavalcade now once more in order, lighting cigars as they proceeded

on their way, all commenced a conversation wherein the excellence of the mules furnished a universal topic, and the sun having now sunk below the horizon, we speedily arrived, jogging on merrily, at the quarters of the third division.

The fidelity and meritorious exertions of these Spaniards in our service, may excuse the repetition of eulogy. Even boxes of dollars, in cases of necessity, and such occurred frequently, were entrusted to their charge; yet alone in dreary nights, in mountain paths, and under every species of difficulty, they acquitted themselves favourably with hardly an exception throughout the whole campaign; and I will take leave to relate as an instance in point, one more occurrence, which indeed should have been introduced before, though at this moment it occurs to my recollection.

During our previous retreat to the lines in Portugal, a pine grove, at the entrance of which lay several barrels of ammunition, accidentally took fire, and a general officer—whose name I forget, not being then under his command—having requested me to hasten to the spot and render assistance with my brigade of mules, I proceeded thither accordingly. The mules of the ordnance department, to whom the duty belonged, were at pasture, and out of the way. When I proposed to the Spaniards to depart instantly on this service, they not only obeyed without any demur, and hurried to the spot one and all with the utmost alacrity, but conducted themselves with such energy and courage when there, that if every barrel of gunpowder had contained gold, and if all the gold it contained had been his own, it were impossible, I am sure, to evince more eagerness than

every individual muleteer now displayed to secure his cargo.

Like lions they set to their work, though the wind drove the fire onwards, blazing and crackling among the tops of the trees, till pieces of fiery bark fell in flakes like a snow-storm, on every side round and about among the barrels, and without flinching or hesitating a moment they covered with sacks, tarpaulins, and their own garments the combustible cargo, and in a few minutes successfully removed the whole, not less than forty or fifty barrels, to a place of safety.

The onset of our troops was received by the enemy with furious resistance at the battle of Orthez ; where the third division, having forded the Gave de Pau, performed a conspicuous part on the chain of hills in front of the town. The French seemed there determined to repel the British arms, and as I had a perfect view of the fight, during the whole morning, I watched with intense anxiety the career of victory, as it hovered in doubtful guise, first driven one way and then the other, amid the crash of contending musquetry. Towards the evening, when the enemy gave way, and I crossed the field of battle from end to end, I saw successively at each point of contention, the slain lying on the ground by dozens ; as it were side by side as they had fought and fallen, and I remarked especially one dense group of the 88th who thus marshalled, poor fellows, paid tribute to the glory of the day, in consequence of the manoeuvring of the regiment, when hotly engaged, being inopportunedly impeded by an intersecting lane.

In the middle of the fray, as I was sitting on horseback a spectator of the combat, my office establish-

ment waiting at a point of rendezvous not far off for orders, of which for the present I had none to give until our movements became decided by the fortune of war, and while that terrible scene of carnage was then actually passing before my eyes, which now long since has become matter of history; my dog Tiraboca, the companion of my pet wolf at Celorico, having accompanied my fortunes from Portugal all the way hither, generally, in fact always, remaining with the baggage; contrary to custom on the present occasion took it into his head to follow me, and at this time a hare, terrified by the roar of the battle, crossed the field before him. The dog, to the best of my knowledge, had never before seen a hare, yet without a moment's hesitation, he instinctively gave chase, and I setting spurs to my horse, and following at full gallop with as little delay, a beautiful course ensued that lasted more than a mile. The odds, clumsy animal as he was, were in favour of the dog; and eventually, having turned his antagonist several times, he finally came up with her gallantly, and killed her in a ditch.

From the enemy's light infantry, I am inclined to think it came, no matter whence, but I had no sooner alighted from my horse, to pick up the hare, than I unexpectedly found myself exposed to an exceedingly sharp fire,—in fact balls were ripping the air all around, and on both sides, with a sound particularly disagreeable; so that, postponing the operation of paunching to a more tranquil opportunity, I remounted my horse with my prize and rode quickly away. As I was returning to the spot I had left, I encountered Major-General Sir John, then Colonel Taylor, commanding the 88th regiment, who was

then retiring from the field of battle seriously wounded, and I stopped to express my concern at seeing him in his present condition. Apparently shot through the throat, he sat on a small mule led by a soldier of his regiment, coat, waistcoat, and shirt collar loosened, and the blood streaming down his bosom as low as the saddle. The colonel in reply to my condolence shook his head ; he either could not, or thought it imprudent to attempt to speak. I held up the hare by the hind legs as much as to ask whether he chose to accept it, when he again shook his head, a great deal more dismally than he had shaken it before ; and this last shake certainly did cause the thought to occur to me, that it were well to have forborne altogether to broach on such an occasion, the subject of eating to a wounded man, particularly one like the present unable perhaps to move his jaws. Persisting in my prescription, and in despite of denial, I then gave the hare to the soldier, bidding him be careful to produce it again at a better opportunity. The man in the end, as I am enabled to relate, followed my instructions accordingly, for the General, whom I afterwards met in London, laughing heartily at trouble in the back ground, assured me that although somewhat on the occasion off his feed, he nevertheless devised the means of eating the said hare in the form of a wholesome nutritious mess of soup.

During this affair the Duke of Wellington was struck by a grape shot. I saw him the next day ride slowly along accompanied by General Alava. He looked jaded, and placed his hand often on his hip, as if in pain.

On the next battle that occurred as we followed Soult along the course of the Adour, namely that of Vic Bigorre, the operations of the day, as regarded the third division, might be said to be performed, to use a fox-hunting phrase, "in cover;" the warfare being chiefly confined to the light troops, and among vineyards; whence our men dislodged the enemy with their usual gallantry, although the third division, together with a squadron of heavy cavalry remained a great part of the morning in ambuscade. The position chosen for this purpose was very singularly situated, not far from the town, being an extensive square patch of level ground surrounded on three sides by vineyards, and on the remaining fourth side by an ordinary wood.

Here we remained for some time concealed from sight and quiet enough, till a curious display of military skill was made by the enemy, who having got intelligence of our position, by the assistance of an engineer, posted, it was said, for that purpose on the top of the church tower, contrived, by the help of signals, to direct a fire upon us from their guns below; and as they threw their shot and shells over the wood with considerable precision, some, of the latter especially, did execution. I saw one shell fall and burst among a group of cavalry, killing some horses and men, and wounding others. One trooper closely entangled with the mass, his own dead horse in particular, with difficulty disengaging himself, the rest of his companions having ridden away, and the shot and shells still flying in the same direction, first rose on his legs, and previously to leaving the spot, unsaddled the lifeless animal, loosed the bridle from its

head, very deliberately threw the spoils across his shoulder, and then carried them away. The horse, which I afterwards saw, was nearly cut in two.

As I was sitting on horseback close to the aforesaid wood ; remaining there, by the way, not owing to predilection, but during the extraordinary manœuvring of this woodland affair, not knowing whither else to go ; a shell fell with a surprising whizz, and then a crash, through the branches of a large oak tree, a few yards distant, and burst so immediately, that I had not time to descend from my horse before a volley of sticks, stones, and soft earth flew over my head. I conclude that a raised bank fortunately intervened. Meanwhile, in this detected ambuscade, the cannon-balls thrown over the wood or vineyard from guns pointed by signal, as I have already stated, and necessarily from their position raised to a considerable angle of elevation, no sooner completed their parabolic flight and dropped upon the plain than they continued to *recocher* for some time, bounding here and there in various directions ; and since they were seen during their progress as distinctly as cricket balls, whole companies of men, according to orders, stooped simultaneously, and thus avoided collision with the leaping globes. Whenever by chance they impinged upon man or horse, but this was seldom, it was with deadly force. I was well pleased to quit my present situation when the troops engaged on our right, successfully drove the enemy from their lodgements. I then gained an extensive, tranquil prospect of things around, and took up my quarters moreover in Vic Bigorre. The third division encamped a couple of miles beyond the town, for the night.

The campaign was now drawing rapidly to a close; for three weeks subsequent to this affair of Vic Bigorre, that is to say on the 10th of April, followed the battle of Toulouse. Within the intervening period the third division formed a part of that portion of the troops, accidentally cut off, and for the space of two or three days divided from the main body of the army by the Garonne, in suchwise that Soult, had he thought proper, might have attacked the body, in number altogether not exceeding 17,000, with an overwhelming force. On the occasion of the passage of the whole army across the river being attempted by a bridge of pontoons previously on the 4th, the strain on the moorings produced by the violence of the stream was so intense that the line of boats stretching from bank to bank, formed a curve almost equal to a semicircle. I led my horse slowly over the said crazy bridge, the transit altogether being regulated with extreme caution; and eventually the troops before stated having passed over, the remainder, unable afterwards to cross that day, on the next found the passage impracticable. Boat-loads of stones meanwhile, dead horses, and all sorts of floating heavy bodies, turned adrift by the enemy, for the purpose of doing mischief to the pontoons, were sent floating along the river.

During the whole of this period,—a portentous crisis,—the command of the troops thus cut off, including in addition to the third, the fourth and sixth divisions, besides cavalry and artillery, devolved upon Picton, who never appeared to me more joyous and happy, than while now employed nearly the whole day in reconnoitring the country in the neighbourhood. In our brief early interviews every morning,

continued during the present movement as well as throughout the whole campaign, it was plain to read just so much of his thoughts in his countenance, as proclaimed an ardent desire to avail himself of the independent command that fortune thus threw in his way, by commencing active and decisive operations.

I was engaged in various offices of duty during the battle of Toulouse, and in fact the disturbances in the way of business were less on this, than on previous similar occasions. The final close of our movements was now confidently anticipated, neither were we in expectation as usual of a long day's march at the heel of the affair. I had consequently the less time at my disposal as a spectator, yet I was an eye-witness of a considerable portion of the battle, particularly of the retreat of the Spaniards as they ran helter skelter down the hill, and the gallant charge that subsequently followed, when the enemy were driven from the heights. For a short time I remained in a house, a receptacle for the wounded, where many a dismal portrait appeared before my eyes, unnecessary to place in too prominent relief, and many besides in the course of these pages I have omitted, in despite of impressions remaining on my memory. One incident alone of all I will mention, namely, of a woman making her way under a severe fire from the enemy, to seek her slain husband in the field of battle, and bearing the body away on her back. I was induced particularly to observe this woman's proceedings, her object in view being evident from the beginning, and the moment she arrived at the spot where the corpse among several of the dead lay, put in immediate execution.

Seating herself on the ground and raising the body to a sitting posture, back to back, she drew the arms one on each side of her neck across her shoulders, raised herself on her feet, and thus performing the pious office, in a stooping position, regained a place of safety.

The last time I saw General Picton was in the streets of Toulouse. Wellington having made his grand entry two or three days before, we were as it were in a new world, where, if good quarters, a dinner every day at the Café, and a visit to the theatre in the evening, were not sufficient to inspire an individual with a portion of the universal excitement of the day, the enthusiasm that broke forth during the entertainments at the popular refrein,

“ Ventre Saint gris au nom du fils d’Henri
Français du fond de l’âme
Des anciens preux redit le cri cheri
Mon Dieu, mon Roi, Madame!”

never failed in producing, among all sorts, ranks, and conditions of people, a galvanic effect.

“ Come here,” exclaimed Picton one morning, when, as I was walking, I met him riding in the town; then throwing himself hastily off his horse and leading the animal by the bridle, he walked along the street and conversed in a kind and friendly manner, at the same time acquainting me of his intention to recommend me forthwith for promotion, which proffered act of kindness and remembrance he accordingly carried into effect. The above is not the only example of such a nature that I had the pleasure to experience while under his command, although I can only refer in general terms to

another previous instance, which took place at Hasparren, soon after his return from leave of absence in England. The General there, at one of our morning interviews, when no other person was present, took occasion with the utmost frankness and candour, and in a manner strongly illustrative of his character, to refer to times gone by when, as I have before hinted, less cordiality existed on his part towards me at the early period of our acquaintance; and thence, with a freedom known only to a liberal mind, and in terms more direct and explicit than in the course of my life under similar circumstances I have ever known, he without hesitation, and manfully, cancelled all former and less favourable expressions that might have escaped his lips, by a most flattering and sweeping acknowledgment of my services during the entire period I was in charge of his division.

* * * * *

I forget on what part of the road it happened, on our march from Toulouse to Bordeaux, the day having at last arrived when the British and Portuguese regiments in the division who, now long used to fight successfully side by side, mutually esteemed each other as soldiers and brothers, were to go, the one to England and the other to Portugal, that the simple arrangement to that effect was carried into execution. I will previously give a short extract from one of Picton's letters, dated 1st of July 1813, expressing his individual opinion of their conduct at the battle of Vittoria, a feeling recognized, I am sure, by every British officer and private in the Peninsular service.

“The Portuguese brigade,” writes the General, “attached to the division, were the admiration of the

whole army ; it advanced in line over difficult and broken ground in front of nearly fifty pieces of cannon, and a continual volley of musquetry, without ever hesitating, and drove the enemy from several commanding positions which they successively occupied. During this operation they lost above seven hundred men." * * * * *

The morning I remember was beautifully clear, and the man in high health,—their spirits, rather than depressed, rendered even still more buoyant by the small portion of the day's march already passed, when we reached the angular point of the two diverging roads in question. There was no halt,—not a sound uttered —nor interchange of gesture,—in fact, the ceremony, if ceremony it may be called, passed in stern military silence. The Portuguese and British regiments, forming two parallel lines, previously marching on the broad road side by side, simply divided at the word "right" and "left shoulders forward," and both nations, cheered by the bands of each leading regiment, amid the tramping of many feet, inclining gradually towards their respective homes, there parted for ever. Many a veteran's eye on that morning was dimmed almost to darkness by a tear that had before gleamed, even in brightened lustre, on the bayonet of the enemy. * * * * *

The third division was finally ordered from Bordeaux to embark for England, at Pouillac, a small neat town on the Gironde, a few miles below the mouth of the Garonne. I now received the charge of the embarkation of the remainder of the army in the transports, which, as soon as reported ready, were immediately occupied by troops sent down from Bordeaux.

While residing at Pouillac, engaged in this service, and troops were arriving and departing every day, I remember an imposing effect, on one occasion produced by the sudden appearance at a distance in the river, one fine evening, of a regiment of guards on their route for embarkation on board a little fleet of the small boats called Chasse-mareès, in which they were making sail from Bordeaux. After an unusually calm and sultry day, the sun being about three or four hours high, the weather suddenly changed, a black mantle of cloud rose in the wind's eye, and a spanking topsail breeze set in immediately right down the river, that, overtaking the little vessels aforesaid on the horizon, every boat crowded with red coats, bore them along with a flowing sheet, extending, like a hostile miniature squadron, the whole breadth of the river in the form of a half moon, as it were in menacing attitude towards the town.

My labours now in every way became light, as the means daily augmented of ease and relaxation. In a plentiful country, within an hour's ride of the Chateau la Fite, in the midst of worldly luxuries, I need perhaps only here recapitulate, independent of the well-known produce of the aforesaid domain, exquisite native Sauterne, manufactured in the neighbourhood,—and among infinite variety of fish, from the Gironde, young sturgeon, about a yard in length, that boiled flaky and creamy, and in my opinion, were very superior in consistence and flavour.

At last, the whole army had embarked, and the last transport containing British troops departed from Pouillac. I then obtained leave, on returning

to England, to pursue the route via Paris, and proceeded accordingly by the Bordeaux diligence, travelling day and night to the former city, where, finally, the vehicle arrived at ten o'clock in the morning. I then immediately made my toilette, ate my breakfast, went to the Louvre, whence the Belvidere Apollo, the Venus de Medicis, and the Laocoön, were not then removed, passed the remainder of the same day, and four others successively, in tramping on foot and rolling in cabriolets about the streets of Paris, and continued to see sights one after another, without intermission, fagging almost or quite as hard in the pursuit of pleasure as I had been wont to do in the toils of service. I afterwards departed by way of Calais and Dover, and in August, 1814, arrived in London. I had now remained in England only a few weeks, when I received orders from the Lords of the Treasury to embark for America, and accordingly on the 28th of October following went on board the *Lady Elizabeth*, Captain George Davey, commander, a small schooner that had been captured from the Americans, and was casually at that time employed as an extra packet in our service.

In the early part of our course, we hove so far to the southward as to be greeted by a visit from a flying-fish which flew on board, but altogether we had an exceeding rough voyage. Especially when approaching the American continent, we encountered a merciless north-wester, which caused us to lay to for three days under storm stay-sails, the vessel occasionally receiving violent blows of the sea, that swept her decks, and stove in her bulwarks; and owing to the chain-plates of her fore shrouds giving

way, compelled us to wear ship in a furious sea; which manœuvre, owing to the trim of the vessel, and the length and weight of our mast, was performed with much hazard, although with complete success, and the stress of the wind thus thrown on the opposite rigging. Finally, after being thirty-two days at sea, we safely arrived at Halifax, Nova Scotia.

My orders being to proceed to Quebec, subject to farther instructions from the senior commissariat officer at the former station, the navigation of the river St. Lawrence being closed for the winter on our arrival, I was offered permission to remain accordingly at Halifax till the spring; however, I preferred to undertake the overland journey to Quebec during the winter.

Having already laid before the public a detailed account of the aforesaid expedition, of my subsequent journey from Quebec to Lake Huron, and of five months' residence in the forests that followed, I have now only briefly to relate the object of my visit and sojourn in those regions. Few words will suffice to give the information necessary, which information, by the way, ought to have been given before, in my preface to "Forest Scenes."

I was sent from Quebec to Lake Huron to superintend the commissariat duties of a naval establishment then proposed to be formed for the maintenance of the British flag on those waters; but about the middle of the succeeding March, peace having been proclaimed with America, I was detained in suspense the aforesaid five months, waiting in the woods for orders from my department, which or-

ders, when at last they arrived, first summoned me to Quebec, and then sent me back to England.

Ten months had only elapsed from the period of my leaving England when I again reported myself to the Lords Commissioners of his Majesty's Treasury in London, and after the expiration of twelve months was again dispatched across the Atlantic, to serve on the peace establishment of the commissariat at Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Five years more accordingly I remained at that station, engaged in a regular routine of office duty, such as afforded little of variety or novelty; and when at the expiration of the above mentioned period, I ultimately returned to England, I may truly say, that as far as regards acquaintance with the world and its ways, I might, to all intents and purposes, almost as well have landed in a *terra incognita*.

One word more before I submit these pages to the public eye, lest I be deemed desirous to impress with undue importance subordinate duties, to emancipate my mind from the recollection of former control, or at any rate, lest I appear to manifest forgetfulness of the worthy chief, under whose orders, in the Peninsula, during the whole active period of this memoir, I had the honour to serve.

Yet, although I have, as far as practicable, confining my narrative to the sphere of duty wherein I myself was actually engaged, omitted thereby a more general view of commissariat affairs, I feel satisfaction to reflect, that the delineation of the nature of my own employment, forming an inconsider-

able part of the whole, will serve at least to afford, by comparison, the means of estimating the vast measure of responsibility entrusted to Sir Robert Kennedy,—whose excellent example on service was a main incitement to his inferiors in the performance of their duty, while his private, sterling worth commanded their respect and regard.

THE END.

Albemarle Street, July, 1837.

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